CONCENTRATION & MEDITATION

SWAMI SIVANANDA

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AND
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Sri Swami Sivananda

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OM

Dedicated to

Yogins and Bhaktas

Who Strive to Attain

The Summum Bonum of Life

Through Concentration

and

Meditation

OM

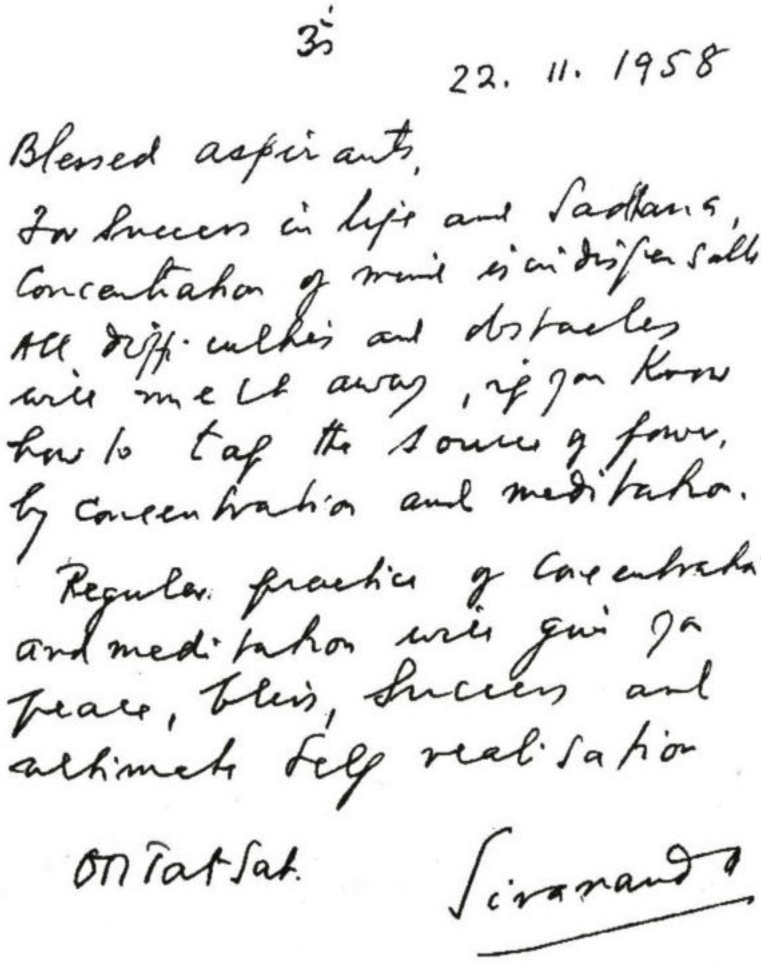
SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.



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22. 11. 1958

Blessed aspirants,

For success in life and Sadhana, Concentration of mind is indispensable. All difficulties and obstacles will melt away, if you know how to tap the source of power, by concentration and meditation.

Regular practice of concentration and meditation will give you peace, bliss, success and ultimate Self realisation.

Om Tat Sat.

Sivananda

INTRODUCTION

Concentration and meditation are the royal roads to perfection. Concentration leads to meditation. Fix the mind on one object either within the body or without. Keep it there steadily for some time. This is concentration. You will have to practise this daily. Purify the mind first through the practice of right conduct and then take to the practice of concentration. Concentration without purity of mind is of no avail. There are some occultists who have concentration. But they have no good character. That is the reason why they do not make any progress in the spiritual line.

He who has a steady posture and has purified his nerves and the vital sheath by constant practice of control of breath will be able to concentrate easily. Concentration will be intense if you remove all distractions. A true celibate who has preserved his energy will have wonderful concentration.

Some foolish, impatient students take to concentration at once without in any manner undergoing any preliminary training in ethics. This is a serious blunder. Ethical perfection is a matter of paramount importance.

You can concentrate internally on any of the seven centres of spiritual energy. Attention plays a very prominent part in concentration. He who has developed his powers of attention will have good concentration. A man who is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any subject or object even for a second. His mind will be jumping like an old monkey.

A scientist concentrates his mind and invents many new things. Through concentration he opens the layers of the gross mind and penetrates deeply into the higher regions of the mind and gets deeper knowledge. He concentrates all the energies of his mind into one focus and throws them out upon the materials he is analysing and finds out their secrets.

He who has gained abstraction (withdrawing the senses from the objects) will have good concentration. You will have to march on in the spiritual path step by step, stage by stage. Lay the foundation of right conduct, postures, regulation of breath and abstraction to start with. The superstructure of concentration and meditation will be successful then only.

You should be able to visualise the object of concentration very clearly even in its absence. You will have to call up the mental picture at a moment's notice. If you have good concentration you can do this without much difficulty.

In the beginning stage of practice, you can concentrate on the 'tik-tik' sound of a watch or on the flame of a candle or any other object that is pleasing to the mind. This is concrete concentration. There is no concentration without something to rest the mind upon. The mind can be fixed on any object in the beginning which is pleasant. It is very difficult to fix the mind in the beginning on an object which the mind dislikes.

Those who practise concentration evolve quickly. They can do any work with scientific accuracy and great efficiency. What others do in six hours can be done by one who has concentration within half an hour. What others can read in six hours, can be read by one who does concentration within half an hour. Concentration purifies and calms the surging emotions, strengthens the current of thought and clarifies the ideas. Concentration helps a man in his material progress also. He will have a very good outturn of work in his office or business house. What was cloudy and hazy before becomes clear and definite. What was difficult before becomes easy now and what was complex, bewildering and confusing before becomes easy within the mental grasp. You can achieve anything through concentration. Nothing is impossible to a man who practises regular concentration. It is very difficult to practise concentration when one is hungry and when one is suffering from an acute disease. He who practises concentration will possess very clear mental vision.

Meditation is the only royal road to the attainment of salvation or Moksha. Meditation kills all pains, sufferings and three kinds of Taapas (fevers) and five Kleshas or sorrows. Meditation gives the vision of unity. Meditation produces sense of oneness. Meditation is an aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high in the realms of eternal bliss and everlasting peace. It is a mysterious ladder that connects earth and heaven and takes the aspirant to the immortal abode of Brahman.

Meditation is the continuous flow of one thought of God or Atman, like the continuous flow of oil from one vessel to another (Tailadharavat). Meditation follows concentration.

Practise meditation in the early morning from 4 to 6 (Brahma-Muhurta). This is the best time for the practice of meditation.

Sit in Padma or Siddha or Sukha Asana. Keep the head, neck and the trunk in a straight line, and concentrate either on the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, or on the heart with closed eyes.

Meditation is of two kinds viz., Saguna Dhyana (concrete meditation) and Nirguna Dhyana (abstract meditation). In concrete meditation the Yogic student meditates on the form of Lord Krishna, Rama, Sita, Vishnu, Siva, Gayatri or Devi. In abstract meditation he meditates on his own Self or Atman.

Place the picture of Lord Hari with four hands in front of you. Gaze at this picture steadily for five minutes and then close the eyes and visualise the picture. During visualisation move the mind on the various parts of Vishnu. See with the mind His feet first, then in the following order, legs, His yellow silk cloth, His golden necklace set with Kaustubha gem on the breast, the earring, Makarakundala, then the face, then the crown on the head, then the discus in the right upper hand, then the conch in the upper left hand, then the mace in the lower right hand, then the lotus in the left lower hand. Then come down to the feet and repeat the process again and again. Finally fix the mind either on the feet or on the face. Repeat the Mantra, Hari Om or Om Namo Narayanaya, mentally. Think of the attributes of the Lord such as Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Purity, etc.

Meditate on Om and its meaning with feeling. This is Nirguna Dhyana. Repeat Om mentally. Identify yourself with Atman. Feel "I am the all-pervading immortal Self or Atman. I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. I am Sakshi or silent witness of three states and all modifications of the mind. I am pure consciousness, I am distinct from the body, mind and Prana and senses, I am the self-luminous Light of lights. I am the eternal supreme Soul."

If you have contentment, cheerfulness, patience, unruffled state of mind, sweet voice, one-pointedness of mind, light body, fearlessness, desirelessness, disgust for worldly things, think that you are advancing in the spiritual path and that you are nearing God.

O Prem! There is a place where you will neither hear any sound nor see any colour. That place is Param Dham or Padam Anamayam (painless seat). This is the realm of peace and bliss. There is no body-consciousness here. Here mind finds rest. All desires and cravings melt away. The Indriyas remain quiet here. The intellect ceases functioning. There is neither fight nor quarrel here. Will you seek this silent abode through silent meditation? Solemn stillness reigns supreme here. Rishis of yore attained this place only by melting the mind in the silence. Brahman shines in native effulgence.

Forget the body. Forget the surroundings. Forgetting is the highest Sadhana. It helps meditation a great deal. It makes the approach to God easier. By remembering God, you can forget all these things.

Taste the spiritual consciousness by withdrawing the mind from the sensual objects and fixing it on the lotus-feet of the Lord, who is ever shining in the chambers of your heart. Merge within by practising deep silent meditation. Plunge deep. Swim freely in the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Float in the Divine river of Joy. Tap the source. March direct towards the fountain-head of Divine Consciousness and drink the Nectar. Feel the thrill of Divine Embrace and enjoy Divine Ecstasy. I shall leave you here. You have attained the state of immortality and fearlessness. O Prem! Fear not. Shine now. Thy light has come.

Practise regular systematic meditation during the same hours daily. You will get the meditative mood easily.

The more you meditate, the more you will have inner spiritual life, wherein mind and Indriyas do not play. You will be very close to the source, Atman. You will enjoy the waves of bliss and peace.

All sensual objects will have no attraction for you now. The world will appear to you as a long dream. Jnana will dawn in you by constant, deep meditation.

You will be fully illumined. The curtain of ignorance will drop now. The sheaths will be torn. The body-idea will vanish. You will realise the significance of the Mahavakya, "Tat Tvam Asi." All differences, distinctions, qualities will disappear. You will see everywhere one infinite, illimitable Atman, full of Bliss, Light and Knowledge. This will be a rare experience, indeed. Do not tremble with fear like Arjuna. Be bold. You will be left alone now. There is nothing to see or hear now. There are no senses. It is all pure consciousness only.

Thou art Atman, O Prem. Thou art not this perishable body. Destroy the Moha for this filthy body. Do not utter in future "My body." Say, "this instrument." The sun is setting now. It is drawing within all the rays. Now sit for meditation. Again have a dive in the sacred Atmic Triveni within. Collect all the rays of the mind and plunge within quite deep into the innermost recesses of the heart. Give up all sorts of fears, cares, worries and anxieties. Rest in the ocean of silence. Enjoy the eternal peace. Your old Jivahood is gone now. All limitations have disappeared. If the desires and old cravings try to hiss, destroy them by the rod of Viveka and the sword of Vairagya.

Keep these two with you always for some time till you get Brahmi-Sthiti (fully established in Atman).

OM is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Om is Infinity, Eternity. Sing OM. Feel OM. Chant OM. Live in Om. Meditate on OM. Roar OM OM OM. Hear OM. Taste Om. See OM. Eat OM. Drink OM. OM is Thy Name! May that OM guide you! OM! OM! OM! OM SANTIH.

Swami Sivananda

ॐ

।। शिवध्यानम् ।।

शान्तं पद्मासनस्थं शशधरमुकुटं पञ्चवक्त्रं त्रिनेत्रं
शूलं वज्रं च खड्गं परशुमभयदं दक्षिणांगे वहन्तम्।
नागं पाशं च घण्टां डमरुकसहितां चांकुशं वामभागे
नानालंकारदीप्तं स्फटिकमणिनिभं पार्वतीशं नमामि।।

I prostrate myself before the five-faced Lord of Parvati, who is adorned with various ornaments, who shines like Sphatika jewel, who is seated peacefully in lotus pose, with moon-crested crown, with three eyes, wearing trident, Vajra, sword and axe on the right side, serpent, noose, bell, Damaru and spear on the left side and who gives protection from all fears to His devotees.

ॐ

।। शंकराचार्यध्यानम् ।।

पद्मासीनं प्रशान्तं यमनिरतमनंगारितुल्यप्रभावं
फाले भस्माङ्किताभं स्मितरुचिरमुखांभोजमिन्दीवराक्षम्।
कम्बुग्रीवं कराभ्यामविहतविलसत्पुस्तकं ज्ञानमुद्रां
वन्द्यै गीर्वाणमुख्यैर्नतजनवरदं भावये शंकरार्यम्।।

I meditate on Sri Sankaracharya who is seated in Padmasana with Jnanamudra, who is calm, endowed with virtues like Yama, Niyama, etc., whose glory is as great as that of Lord Siva, who wears the sacred ashes on the forehead, whose face resembles the blossomed lotus, with lotus-like eyes, possessing sacred books in hand, who is ever adored by people of high learning and wisdom, and who fulfils the desires of his devotees (who prostrate themselves before him).

ॐ

।। ओङ्कारध्यानम् ।।

ओङ्कारं निगमैकवेद्यमनिशं वेदान्ततत्त्वास्पदं
चोत्पत्तिस्थितिनाशहेतुममलं विश्वस्य विश्वात्मकम् ।
विश्वत्राणपरायणं श्रुतिशतैः संप्रोच्यमानं विभुं
सत्यज्ञानमनन्तमूर्तिममलं शुद्धात्मकं तं भजे ।।

I always meditate on the ever-pure, all-pervading Pranava, Omkara, which is known by the various Srutis as the source and support of Vedanta, as the cause of creation, existence and dissolution of this universe, which is the Soul of this universe and which is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity.

ॐ

।। दत्तात्रेयध्यानम् ।।

मालाकमण्डलुधरः करपद्मयुग्मे
मध्यस्थपाणियुगले डमरुत्रिशूलम् ।
अध्यस्थ ऊर्ध्वकरयोः शुभशंखचक्रे
वन्दे तमत्रितनयं भुजषट्कयुक्तम् ।।

I meditate on Dattatreya, the son of Atri, who has six hands, who is with garland and Kamandalu in two hands, with Damaru and Trisula (trident) in the other two hands and with conch and discus in the upper two hands.

ॐ

।। गणेशध्यानम् ।।

गजाननं भूतगणादिसेवितं
कपित्थजम्बूफलसारभक्षणम् ।
उमासुतं शोकविनाशकारणं
नमामि विघ्नेश्वरपादपङ्कजम् ।।

I worship the lotus-feet of Ganesa, the son of Uma, the destroyer of all sorrows, who is served by the host of Devas and Bhutas (elementals) and others and who takes the essence of Kapittha (a fruit resembling Bilva or stone-apple) and Jambu fruits.

ॐ

।। सुब्रह्मण्यध्यानम् ।।

षडाननं कुंकुमरक्तवर्णं
महामतिं दिव्यमयूरवाहनम् ।
रुद्रस्य सूनुं सुरसैन्यनाथं
गुहं सदाहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ।।

I always take refuge in Lord Guha of six faces, who is of deep red colour and infinite knowledge, who has the divine peacock to ride on, the son of Lord Siva and the leader of the army of the Devas.

ॐ

।। सरस्वतीध्यानम् ।।

या कुन्देन्दुतुषारहारधवला या शुभ्रवस्त्रावृता
या वीणावरदण्डमण्डितकरा या श्वेतपद्मासना।
या ब्रह्माच्युतशंकरप्रभृतिभिर्देवैः सदा वन्दिता
सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती निःशेषजाड्यापहा ।।

May that Goddess Sarasvati who is of fair complexion, who wears a garland of snow-white Kunda flower, who wears pure white cloth, who holds the best and sacred Vina, who is seated on a white lotus, who is worshipped by Brahma, Achyuta, Sankara and others, who is the cause of removing all inertness and laziness, protect me.

ॐ

।। महालक्ष्मीध्यानम् ।।

वन्दे पद्मकरां प्रसन्नवदनां सौभाग्यदां भाग्यदां
हस्ताभ्यामभयप्रदां मणिगणैर्नानाविधैर्भूषिताम्।
भक्ताभीष्टफलप्रदां हरिहरब्रह्मादिभिस्सेवितां
पार्श्वे पङ्कजशंखपद्मनिधिभिर्युक्तां सदा शक्तिभिः ।।

I meditate on Goddess Lakshmi who has lotus in Her hands, who is of cheerful countenance, who bestows fearlessness with both Her hands, who is decked with precious jewels of various kinds, who bestows the desired fruits on Her devotees, who is worshipped by Hari, Siva and Brahma, who is at all times surrounded by Saktis, and has Nidhis (treasures) known as Sankha, Padma and Mahapadma.

ॐ

।। कृष्णध्यानम् ।।

वंशीविभूषितकरान्नवनीरदाभात्
पीताम्बरादरुणबिम्बफलाधरोष्ठात् ।
पूर्णेन्दुसुन्दरमुखादरविन्दनेत्रात्
कृष्णात्परं किमपि तत्त्वमहं न जाने ।।

I know not anything higher than the lotus-eyed Krishna with hands adorned with flute, looking like a heavy-laden cloud, wearing yellow silk garment and with lips like ruddy Bimba fruit and face shining like the full moon.

ॐ

।। रामध्यानम् ।।

ध्यायेदाजानुबाहुं धृतशरधनुषं बद्धपद्मासनस्थं
पीतं वासो वसानं नवकमलदलस्पर्धिनेत्रं प्रसन्नम् ।
वामांकारूढसीतामुखकमलमिलल्लोचनं नीरदाभं
नानालंकारदीप्तं दधतमुरुजटामण्डलं रामचन्द्रम् ।।

One should meditate on Sri Ramachandra, with hands reaching the knees, holding the bow and arrows, seated on the locked-up lotus posture, wearing a yellow garb, with eyes vying with the newly blossomed lotus petals, with a pleasant gait, who has Sita to his left side, who is blue like the clouds, who is adorned with all kinds of ornaments and having a big circle of Jata on the head.

ॐ

।। गायत्रीध्यानम् ।।

मुक्ताविद्रुमहेमनीलधवलच्छायैर्मुखैस्तीक्षणै-
र्युक्तामिन्दुनिबद्धरत्नमुकुटां तत्त्वात्मवर्णात्मिकाम् ।
गायत्रीं वरदाभयाङ्कुशकशां शुभ्रं कपालं गदां
शंखं चक्रमथारविन्दयुगलं हस्तैर्वहन्तीं भजे ।।

I meditate on the lotus-feet of Goddess Gayatri, whose face glows with the pearls, coral, gold, blue and white jewels, whose crown is decorated with pearls and the moon, who is the embodiment of the sacred Truth that signifies the essence of the Vedas, who has Her two hands as the giver of boons and fearlessness and who holds Ankusa (trident), Kasa (whip), the skull, Gada (club), the conch, the disc and two white lotus flowers in Her hands.

ॐ

।। सूर्यध्यानम् ।।

भास्वद्रत्नाढ्यमौलिः स्फुरदधररुचा रंजितश्चारुकेशो
भास्वान्यो दिव्यतेजाः करकमलयुतः स्वर्णवर्णः प्रभाभिः ।
विश्वाकाशावकाशग्रहपतिशिखरे भाति यश्चोदयाद्रौ
सर्वानन्दप्रदाता हरिहरनमितः पातु मां विश्वचक्षुः ।।

May the Sun-God (Surya) the eye of the world, who is the bestower of all bliss, who is worshipped by Lord Hari, Siva and other gods, who shines in the rising mountains, who shines with jewel-decked crown, who is the lord of the planets, who pervades the whole universe, who shines with the glow of His lips and beautiful hair and who is endowed with divine splendour, protect me.

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Concentration
and
Meditation

CHAPTER ONE

THEORY OF CONCENTRATION

1. What is Concentration?

"*Desa-bandhas-chittasya dharana*":—Concentration is fixing the mind on an external object or an internal point. Once a Sanskrit scholar approached Kabir and asked him, "O Kabir, what are you doing now?" Kabir replied, "O Pandit, I am detaching the mind from worldly objects and attaching it to the Lotus-Feet of the Lord." This is concentration. Right conduct, posture, Pranayama and abstraction from sensual objects will pave a long way in achieving rapid success in concentration. Concentration is the sixth step in the Yogic Ladder. There can be no concentration without something upon which the mind may rest. A definite purpose, interest, attention will bring success in concentration.

The senses draw you out and perturb your peace of mind. If your mind is restless, you cannot make any progress. When the rays of the mind are collected by practice, the mind becomes concentrated and you get Ananda from within. Silence the bubbling thoughts and calm the emotions.

You should have patience, adamantine will and untiring persistence. You must be very regular in your practices. Otherwise laziness and adverse forces will take you away from the Lakshya. A well-trained mind can be fixed at will upon any object either inside or outside to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

Everybody possesses some ability to concentrate on some lines. But for spiritual progress concentration should be developed to a very high degree. A man with an appreciable degree of concentration has more earning capacity and turns out more work in a shorter time. In concentration there should be no strain on the brain. You should not fight or wrestle with the mind.

A man whose mind is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any object even for a second. Celibacy, Pranayama, reduction of wants and activities, renunciation of sensual objects, solitude, silence, discipline of the senses, annihilation of lust, greed, anger, non-mixing with undesirable persons, giving up of newspaper-reading and visiting cinemas, all increase the power of concentration.

Concentration is the only way to get rid of worldly miseries and tribulations. The practitioner will have very good health and a cheerful mental vision. He can get the penetrative insight. He can do any work with greater efficiency. Concentration purifies and calms the surging emotions, strengthens the current of thought and clarifies the ideas. Purify the mind through Yama and Niyama. Concentration without purity is of no use.

Japa of any Mantra and Pranayama will steady the mind, remove Vikshepa and increase the power of concentration. Concentration can be done only if you are free from all distractions. Concentrate on anything that appeals to you as good or anything which the mind likes best. The mind should be trained to concentrate on gross objects in the beginning, and later on you can successfully concentrate on subtle objects and abstract ideas. Regularity in the practice is of paramount importance.

Gross forms: Concentrate on a black dot on the wall, a candle-flame, a bright star, the moon, the picture of OM (AUM), Lord Siva, Rama, Krishna, Devi or your Ishta Devata in front of you with open eyes.

Subtle forms: Sit before the picture of your Ishta Devata and close your eyes. Keep a mental picture of your Ishta Devata at the space between the two eyebrows or in the heart. Concentrate on Muladhara, Anahata, Ajna or any other internal Chakra. Concentrate on the Divine qualities such as love, mercy, or any other abstract idea.

2. Where to Concentrate?

Concentrate gently either on the lotus of the heart (Anahata Chakra) or on the space between the two eyebrows (Ajna Chakra or Trikuti), or on the tip of the nose. Close your eyes.

The seat of the mind is Ajna Chakra. The mind can be controlled easily if you concentrate on the Trikuti.

Bhaktas should concentrate on the heart. Yogis and Vedantins should concentrate on Ajna Chakra.

Crown of the head (Sahasrara) is another seat for concentration. Some Vedantins concentrate here. Some Yogis concentrate on the tip of the nose (Nasikagra Drishti).

Stick to one centre of concentration. Cling to it tenaciously. If you concentrate on the heart stick to it. Never change it. Guru will select a centre for concentration, if you are a student of faith. If you are a man of self-reliance, you can select a centre for yourself.

Bhrumadhya-Drishti is fixing one's eyes between the eyebrows. This region is Ajna Chakra. Sit in Padmasana or Siddhasana in your meditation room and practise this gaze gently from half a minute to half an hour. There must not be the least violence in this practice. Gradually increase the period. This Yogic Kriya removes Vikshepa or the tossing of mind and develops concentration. Lord Krishna prescribes this practice in chapter V, Sloka 27: *"Sparsan kritva bahir bahyan chakshus-chaivantare bhruvoh"*—"Having the outward contacts excluded and with gaze fixed between the eyebrows." This is known as 'frontal gaze,' because the eyes are directed towards the frontal bone or the bone of the forehead. You can select yourself either this gaze or the 'Nasal Gaze.'

'Nasal Gaze' is called Nasikagra-Drishti. The gaze is fixed at the tip of the nose. Even when you walk in the street, keep the nasal gaze. Lord Krishna prescribes this in chapter VI, Sloka 13: *"Samprekshya Nasikagram"*—"Looking fixedly at the point of the nose without looking around." This practice steadies the mind and develops the power of concentration.

A Raja Yogi concentrates on the Trikuti (Ajna Chakra, the space between the two eyebrows) which is the seat of the mind in the waking state. You can easily control the mind if you can concentrate on this region. Light is seen during concentration in this region very quickly even in a day's practice, by some persons. He who wants to meditate on Virat and he who wants to help the world should select this region for his concentration. A Bhakta or a devotee should concentrate on the heart, the seat of emotion and feeling. He who concentrates on the heart gets great Ananda. He who wants to get Ananda should concentrate on the heart.

A Hatha Yogi fixes his mind on the Sushumna Nadi, the middle path in the spinal canal, and on a specific centre, viz., the Muladhara or Manipura or Ajna Chakra. Some Yogis ignore the lower Chakras and fix their mind on the Ajna Chakra only. Their theory is that by controlling the Ajna Chakra all the lower Chakras can be automatically controlled. When you concentrate on a Chakra, a thread-like connection is formed in the beginning between the mind and the Chakra (centre of spiritual energy). Then the Yogi ascends along the Sushumna from Chakra to Chakra. The ascent is made gradually by patient efforts. Even a mere shaking of the opening of the Sushumna causes a great deal of Ananda (bliss). You become intoxicated. You will entirely forget the world. When the opening of the Sushumna is shaken a bit, the Kula Kunadalini Sakti tries to enter Sushumna. Great Vairagya comes in. You will become fearless. You will behold various visions. You will witness the splendid Antarjyotis. This is termed "Unmani Avastha." You will get different Siddhis, different types of Ananda and different kinds of knowledge by controlling and operating on different Chakras: If you have conquered the Muladhara Chakra, you have conquered the earthplane already. If you have conquered the Manipura Chakra, you have conquered fire. Fire will not burn you. Panchadharana (five kinds of Dharana) will help you to conquer the five elements. Learn them under a Guru who is an adept Yogi.

3. Aids to Concentration

Concentration or Dharana is centering the mind on one single thought. During concentration the mind becomes calm, serene and steady. The various rays of the mind are collected and focussed on the object of meditation. The mind is centred on the Lakshya. There will be no tossing of the mind. One idea occupies the mind. The whole energy of the mind is concentrated on that one idea. The senses become still. They do not function. When there is deep concentration, there is no consciousness of the body and surroundings. He who has good concentration can visualise the picture of the Lord very clearly within the twinkling of an eye.

Manorajya (building castles in the air) is not concentration. It is wild jumping of the mind in the air. Do not mistake

Manorajya for concentration or meditation. Check this habit of the mind through introspection and self-analysis.

If you concentrate your mind on a point for 12 seconds, it is Dharana (concentration). Twelve such Dharanas will be a Dhyana (meditation) 12x12=144 seconds. Twelve such Dhyanas will be Samadhi—25 minutes and 28 seconds. This is according to Kurma Purana. Concentration may also be directed on the mental image of God.

The practice of concentration and the practice of Pranayama are interdependent. If you practise Pranayama you will get concentration. Naturally Pranayama follows the practice of concentration. There are different practices according to different temperaments. For some the practice of Pranayama will be easy to start with; for others the practice of concentration will be easy to begin with.

When there is deep concentration you will experience great joy and spiritual intoxication. You will forget the body and the surroundings. All the Prana will be taken up to your head.

Pranayama or control of breath removes the veil of Rajas and Tamas that envelop Sattva. It purifies the nerves (Nadis). It makes the mind firm and steady and thereby renders it fit for concentration. The dross of the mind is cleansed by Pranayama just as the dross of gold is got rid of by melting.

When you study a book with profound interest, you do not hear if a man shouts and calls you by your name. You do not see a person when he stands in front of you. You do not smell the sweet fragrance of flowers that are placed on the table by your side. This is concentration or one-pointedness of mind. The mind is fixed firmly on one thing. You must have such a deep concentration when you think of God or the Atman. It is easy to concentrate the mind on a worldly object, because the mind takes interest in it naturally through force of habit. The grooves are already cut in the brain. You will have to train the mind gradually by daily practice of meditation on God, or on the Self within. The mind will not move now to external objects as it experiences immense joy from the practice of concentration.

A goldsmith converts 10 carat gold into pure gold by adding acids and burning it several times in the crucible. Even so, you will have to purify your sensuous mind through concentration, reflection on the word of your spiritual preceptor and

Upanishadic sentences or meditation, Japa or silent repetition of the name of the Lord.

Beginners will get jerks in meditation. Jerks of head, feet, hands, arms, forearms and trunk may take place. Timid persons are unnecessarily alarmed on this score. It is nothing. Meditation brings on changes in the cells of brain, nerves, etc. Old cells are replaced by new vigorous cells. They are filled with Sattva. New grooves, new channels for Sattvic thought-currents, new avenues are formed in the brain and mind. The muscles are therefore agitated a bit. Be courageous and bold. Courage is an important virtue and qualification for aspirants. Cultivate this positive quality.

Sit in a proper posture. Shut your eyes. Imagine that there is nothing but God everywhere.

Algebra, the science of abstract numbers cannot be understood without a preliminary practice and knowledge of arithmetic, the science of concrete numbers. Kavyas in Sanskrit and higher Vedantic books cannot be understood without a preliminary knowledge of Laghu and Siddhanta Kaumudis and Tarka-Sangraha. Even so, meditation on Nirguna, Nirakara (abstract) Brahman is impossible without a preliminary practice of concentration on a concrete form in the beginning. Approach to the Invisible and the Unknown is to be made through the visible and the known.

The more is the mind fixed on God the more is the strength you will acquire. More concentration means more energy. Concentration opens the inner chambers of love or the realm of eternity. Concentration is the sole key for opening the chamber of knowledge.

Concentrate. Meditate. Develop the powers of deep thinking and concentrated thinking. Many obscure points will be rendered quite clear. You will get answers and solutions from within.

Suka Deva had to go to Raja Janaka to get confirmation of his knowledge and realisation. He was tested by Janaka in the Durbar. Raja Janaka arranged for music and dancing parties all around his palace to distract the attention of Suka Deva. There were various kinds of shows and entertainments. Suka Deva was asked to carry in his hand a cup of milk that was filled to the very brim, around his palace and to make three such rounds without allowing even a drop to fall to the ground. Suka Deva completely succeeded in his attempt as he was fully established in his Self. Nothing could distract his mind.

Be slow and steady in concentration. By practice of concentration you will become superhuman.

You will have to coax the mind in the beginning just as you coax the children. Mind is also like an ignorant child. Speak to the mind. "O Mind, why do you run after false, worthless, perishable objects? You will undergo countless sufferings. Look at Lord Krishna, the Beauty of beauties. You will get everlasting happiness. Why do you run to hear worldly love-songs? Hear the Bhajans of the Lord. Hear the soul-stirring Sankirtan. You will be elevated." The mind will gradually leave its old vicious habits and get itself fixed on the Lotus-Feet of the Lord. When it is freed from Rajas and Tamas, it will guide you. It will be your Guru.

As soon as you sit for meditation chant OM 3 to 6 times. This will drive away all worldly thoughts from the mind and remove Vikshepa (tossing of mind). Then take to mental repetition of Om.

Avoid all other sense-impressions and ideas. Prevent the complications that arise out of correlated actions in the substratum of the mind. Abstract the mind on one idea alone. Shut out all other processes of mentation. Now the whole mind will be filled with one idea only. Just as the recurrence or repetition of a thought or action leads to perfection of that thought or action, so also does recurrence of the same process or the same idea lead to the perfection of abstraction, concentration and meditation.

It will be very difficult to fix the mind on one thought in the beginning. Diminish the number of thoughts. Try to have the thought fixed on one subject. If you think of rose, you can have all sorts of thoughts connected with rose only. You can think of different kinds of roses that are grown in different parts of the world. You can think of the various preparations made out of roses and their uses. Check the aimless wandering state of the mind. Do not have thoughts at random when you think of a rose. Gradually you can fix the mind on one thought only. You will have to discipline the mind daily. Eternal vigilance is needed in thought-control.

Concentration increases by curtailing wants and desires, by observing Mouna (silence) for one or two hours, by remaining in seclusion in a room for one or two hours daily, by practising Pranayama, by prayer, by increasing the number of sittings in meditation daily, by Vichara, etc.

You must try to be always cheerful and peaceful. Then only you will have concentration of mind. The practice of Maitri (friendship) with equals, Karuna (compassion) towards inferiors or distressed persons, Mudita (complacency) towards superiors or virtuous persons and Upeksha (indifference) towards sinners or wicked persons will produce Chitta-Prasada (cheerfulness or serenity) and destroy hatred, jealousy and dislike (Ghrina).

Concentration will increase by lessening the number of thoughts. Certainly it is an uphill work to reduce the number of thoughts. In the beginning, it will tax you much. The task will be unpleasant. But later on you will rejoice as you will get immense strength of mind and internal peace by reduction of thoughts. Armed with patience and perseverance, vigilance, fiery determination and iron-will, you can crush the thoughts easily just as you crush a lemon or orange with ease. After crushing them, it will be easy for you to root them out. Mere crushing or suppression will not suffice. There may be again resurrection of thoughts. They should be totally eradicated just as loose tooth is rooted out.

Concentration can be developed by observing Mouna, by the practice of Pranayama, self-restraint, vigorous Sadhana and cultivating more mental non-attachment.

The practice to concentrate on the Sandhi (junction) between the Jagrat and Svapna and to prolong that Sandhi is a difficult one. At night, sit in a quiet room and watch carefully the mind. You will be able to get at the state of junction. Practise regularly for three months. You will have success.

Reduce your activities. You will have more concentration and inner life.

If you find it difficult to concentrate your mind within a room, come outside and sit in an open place or terrace, or by the side of a river, or in a quiet corner of a garden. You will have good concentration.

You press the button and light flashes out from the torch in twinkling of an eye. Even so, the Yogi concentrates and presses the button at the Ajna Chakra, the centre between the two eyebrows, and the divine light flashes out immediately.

4. Antarmukha and Bahirmukha Vrittis

ANTARMUKHA-VRITTI

You will get Antarmukha-Vritti (inward-moving mind) only after you have destroyed all the externalising powers of the mind. The Antarmukha-Vritti is the indrawing energy of the mind owing to increase in Sattva.

You must learn the art of making the mind introspective or turned inward upon itself through the Yogic Kriya, Pratyahara (abstraction). Those who know this practice can really be peaceful. They only can be really peaceful. They only can be really happy. Mind cannot do any havoc now. The mind cannot externalise itself. It can be kept inside in the Hridaya Guha (cave of the heart). You must starve the mind by Vairagya and Tyaga (renunciation of desires, objects and egoism).

When the outgoing tendencies of the mind are arrested, when the mind is restrained within the heart, when all its attention is turned on itself alone, that condition is Antarmukha-Vritti. The Sadhaka can do a lot of Sadhana when he has this inward Vritti. Vairagya and introspection help a lot in the attainment of this mental state.

BAHIRMUKHA-VRITTI

The Bahirmukha-Vritti is the outgoing tendency of the mind due to Rajas. Further, on account of force of habit the ears and eyes at once run towards sound. Objects and desires are externalising forces. A Rajasic man full of desires can never dream of an inner spiritual life with Antarmukha-Vritti. He is absolutely unfit for the practice of introspection.

When the vision is turned outwards the rush of fleeting events engages the mind. The outgoing energies of the mind begin to play.

When you are firmly established in the idea that the world is unreal, Vikshepa (through names and forms) and Sphurana of Sankalpas (thoughts) will slowly vanish. Repeat constantly the formulae: "Brahman alone is real. World is unreal. Jiva is identical with Brahman." You will gain immense strength and peace of mind through the repetition.

5. Know the Ways of Mind

Dharana is practised for stopping the modifications of the mind.

Concentration is holding the mind to one form or object steadily for a long time.

Kshipta, Mudha, Vikshepa, Ekagra and Niruddha are the five Yogic Bhumikas. The Chitta or mind manifests in five different forms. In the Kshipta state, the rays of the mind are scattered on various objects. It is restless and jumps from one object to another. In the Mudha state, the mind is dull and forgetful. Vikshipta is the gathering mind. It is occasionally steady and at other times distracted. By practice of concentration the mind struggles to gather itself. In the Ekagra state, it is one-pointed. There is only one idea present in the mind. The mind is under control in the Niruddha state.

There is externalising or objectifying power in the mind. This leads to Bahirmukha-Vritti. The mind is drawn towards objects. Through constant Sadhana (spiritual practice) the mind must be checked from externalising. It must be made to move towards Brahman, its original home.

There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point. You are born to concentrate the mind on God after collecting the mental rays that are dissipated on various objects. That is your important duty. You forget the duty on account of Moha for family, children, money, power, position, name and fame.

Mind is compared to quicksilver, because its rays are scattered over various objects. It is compared to a monkey, because it jumps from one object to another. It is compared to moving air, because it is Chanchala. It is compared to a rutting, furious elephant, because of its passionate impetuosity.

Mind is known by the name 'Great Bird,' because it jumps from one object to another just as a bird jumps from one twig to another, from one tree to another. Raja Yoga teaches us how to concentrate the mind and then how to ransack the innermost recesses of our minds.

Concentration is opposed to sensuous desires, bliss to flurry and worry, sustained thinking to perplexity, applied thinking to sloth and torpor, rapture to ill-will.

So long as the thoughts of one are not thoroughly destroyed through persistent practice, he should ever be concentrating his mind on one truth at a time. Through such unremitting practice, one-pointedness will accrue to the mind and instantly all the hosts of thoughts will vanish.

To remove this (tossing and various other obstacles which stand in the way of one-pointedness of mind), the practice of concentration on one thing alone should be made.

Mind is directly or indirectly attached to some pleasing or favourite ideas. When you are in Kashmir, when you are enjoying the picturesque scenery of Gulmarg, Sonmarg, Cheshmashai and Anantanag, your mind will be suddenly upset by shock if you receive a telegram which brings the unhappy tidings of the untimely demise of your only son. The scenery will no longer interest you. You have lost the charm for the scenery. There is ejection of attention. There is depression. It is concentration and attention that gives you pleasure in sight-seeing.

"Having made Atman as the lower Arani (sacrificial wood) and the Pranava as the upper Arani, one should see God in secret through the practice of churning which is Dhyana (meditation)."—*Dhyanabindu Upanishad.*

Place a picture of Lord Jesus in front of you. Sit in your favourite meditative pose. Concentrate gently with open eyes on the picture till tears trickle down your cheeks. Rotate the mind on the cross on the chest, long hair, beautiful beard, round eyes, and the various other limbs of His body and fine spiritual aura emanating from His head, and so on. Think of His divine attributes such as love, magnanimity, mercy and forbearance.

It is easy to concentrate the mind on external objects. The mind has a natural tendency to go outwards. Desire is a mode of the emotive mind. It has got a power of externalising the mind.

Fix the mind on Atman. Fix the mind on the All-pervading pure Intelligence and Self-luminous effulgence (Svayamjyotis).

Stand firm in Brahman. Then you will become "Brahma-Samstha" (established in Brahman).

Practise concentration of mind. Fix the mind on one object, on one idea. Withdraw the mind again and again when it runs away from the Lakshya and fix it there. Do not allow the mind to create hundreds of thought-forms. Introspect and watch the mind carefully. Live alone. Avoid company. Do not mix. This is important. Do not allow the mind to dissipate its energy in vain on vain thoughts, vain worry, vain imagination and vain fear and forebodings. Make it hold on to one thought-form for half an hour by incessant practice. Make the mind to shape itself into one shape and try to keep the shape for hours together through constant and incessant practice.

In trying to concentrate your mind or project a thought even, you will find that you require naturally to form images in your mind. You cannot help it.

Do not wrestle with the mind during meditation. It is a serious mistake. Many neophytes commit this grave error. That is the reason why they get easily tired soon. They get headache and they have to get up very often to pass urine during the course of meditation owing to the irritation set up in the micturition centre in the spinal cord. Sit comfortably in Padma, Siddha, Sukha or Svastika Asana. Keep the head, neck and trunk in one straight line. Relax the muscles, nerves and brain. Calm the objective mind. Close the eyes. Get up at 4 a.m. (Brahma Muhurta). Do not struggle with the mind. Keep it calm and relaxed.

By manipulating the mind you will be able to bring it under your control, make it work as you like and compel it to concentrate its powers as you desire.

In trained Yogis you cannot say where Pratyahara (abstraction) ends and Dharana (concentration) begins, where Dharana ends and Dhyana (meditation) begins, where Dhyana ends and Samadhi (superconscious state) begins. The moment they sit in the Asana, all the processes occur simultaneously with electric or lightning speed, and they enter Samadhi at their conscious will. In the neophytes, Pratyahara first takes place. Then Dharana begins. Then Dhyana slowly commences. Before Samadhi manifests, their minds, getting impatient and tired, drop down. Constant and intense Sadhana with light but nutritious food will bring about sanguine success in getting Samadhi.

Just as a very skilful archer in shooting at a bird is aware of the way in which he takes his steps, holds the bow, the bow-string and the arrow at the time when he pierces the bird, thus "standing in this position, holding thus the bow, thus the bow-string, and thus the arrow, I pierce the bird" and ever afterwards would not fail to fulfil these conditions that he might pierce the bird, even so the aspirant should note the conditions such as suitable food, thus "eating this kind of food, following such a person in such a dwelling in this mode, at this time, I attain to this meditation and Samadhi."

As a clever cook in serving his master, notes the kind of food that his master relishes and henceforward serves it and gets gain, so the aspirant too notes the condition such as nourishment, etc., at the moment of attaining meditation and Samadhi and in fulfilling them gets ecstasy again and again.

A Hatha Yogi tries to concentrate his mind by having his breath controlled through Pranayama, while the Raja Yogi tries to concentrate his mind by Chitta-Vritti-Nirodha (restraining the various modifications of the Chitta) by not allowing the mind to assume various shapes of objects. He does not care for control of breath. But his breath becomes necessarily controlled when his mind is controlled. Hatha Yoga is a branch of Raja Yoga.

Worldly pleasures intensify the desire for enjoying greater pleasures. Hence the mind of worldlings is very restless. There is no satisfaction and mental peace. Mind can never be satisfied, whatever amount of pleasure you may store up for it. The more it enjoys the pleasures, the more it wants them. So people are exceedingly troubled and bothered by their own minds. They are tired of their minds. Hence in order to remove these botherations and troubles the Rishis thought it best to deprive the mind of all sensual pleasures. When the mind has been concentrated or made extinct, it cannot pinch one to seek for further pleasure, and all botherations and troubles are removed for ever and the person attains real peace.

The rays of the mind are scattered in the case of worldly-minded persons. There is dissipation of mental energy in various directions. For purpose of concentration, these scattered rays have to be gathered by Vairagya and Abhyasa, and then the mind must be turned towards God.

The powers of the mind are like rays of light dissipated. The rays of the mind are drawn towards various objects. You will have to gather them patiently through Vairagya and Abhyasa, through Tyaga (renunciation) and Tapas and then march boldly with indefatigable energy towards God or Brahman. When the mental rays are concentrated, illumination begins.

Remove the Rajas and Tamas that envelop the Sattva of the mind by Pranayama, Japa, Vichara and Bhakti. Then the mind becomes fit for concentration.

Know that you are progressing in Yoga and that the Sattva is increasing when you are always cheerful, when the mind is even and concentrated.

6. Reduce Mind-Wandering

A scientist concentrates his mind and invents many things. Through concentration he open the layers of the gross mind and penetrates deeply into higher regions of the mind and gets knowledge. He concentrates all the energies of his mind into one focus and throws them out upon the materials he is analysing and so finds out their secrets.

He who has learnt to manipulate the mind will get the whole of Nature under control.

When you see your dear friend after six years, the Ananda (happiness) that you get is not from the person but from within yourself. The mind becomes concentrated for the time being and you get Ananda from within your own self.

When the rays of the mind are scattered over diverse objects you get pain. When the rays are gathered and collected by practice the mind becomes concentrated and you get Ananda from within.

As mind evolves, you come into conscious relation with mental currents with the minds of others, near and distant, living and dead.

When there is faith, the mind can be easily concentrated on the subject to be understood and then the understanding quickly follows.

If you find it difficult to concentrate on your heart or the space between the two eyebrows (Trikuti) or top of the head, you can concentrate on any external object. You can concentrate on the blue sky, light of the sun, the all-pervading air or ether or sun, moon or stars.

If you experience headache or pain in the skull, shift your centre of concentration to any object outside the body.

If you get headache or pain by concentrating on the Trikuti (the space between the two eyebrows) by turning the eyes upwards, give up the practice at once. Concentrate on the heart.

The mind thinks of words and their meanings. While at other times it thinks of objects. When you attempt to have one-pointedness of mind, you must make the mind not to think of objects and the words and their meanings.

Some medical students leave the medical college soon after joining it as they find it disgusting to wash the pus in ulcers and dissect the dead bodies. They make a serious blunder. In the beginning, it is loathing. After studying pathology, medicine, operative surgery, morbid anatomy, bacteriology, the course will be interesting in the final year. Many spiritual aspirants leave off the practice of concentration of mind after some time as they find it difficult to practise. They also make a grave mistake like the medical students. In the beginning of the practice when you struggle to get over the body-consciousness, it will be disgusting and troublesome. It will be a physical wrestling. The emotions and Sankalpas will be abundant. In the third year of practice the mind will be cool, pure and strong. You will derive immense joy (Ananda). The sum total of pleasures of the whole world is nothing when compared to the Ananda derived from meditation. Do not give up the practice at any cost. Plod on. Persevere. Have patience (Dhriti), Utsaha (cheerfulness), and Sahasa (tenacity, application). You will succeed eventually. Never despair. Find out by serious introspection the various impediments that act as stumbling blocks in your concentration and remove them with patience and effort one by one. Do not allow new Sankalpas and new Vasanas to crop up. Nip them in the bud through Viveka, Vichara and Dhyana.

A man's duty consists in the control of the senses and concentration of the mind.

There was a workman who used to manufacture arrows. Once he was very busy at his work. He was so much absorbed in his work that he did not notice even a big party of the Raja with his retinue passing in front of his shop. Such must be the nature of your concentration when you fix your mind on God. You must have the one idea of God and God alone. No doubt it takes some time to have complete Ekagrata of mind. You will have to struggle very hard to have single-minded concentration. Sri Dattatreya made the above arrow-maker as one of his Gurus.

Even if the mind runs outside during your practice in meditation, do not bother. Allow it to run. Slowly try to bring it to your Lakshya (centre). By repeated practice the mind will be finally focussed in your heart, in the Atman, the Indweller of your heart, the final goal of life. In the beginning the mind may run out 80 times. Within six months it may run 70 times, within a year it may run 50 times, within 2 years it may run 30 times, within 5 years it will be completely fixed in the Divine Consciousness. Then it will not run out at all even if you try your level best to bring it out, like the wandering bull, which was in the habit of running to gardens of different landlords for eating grass but which now eats fresh gram and cotton seeds in its own resting place.

Collect the Rays of Mind. Just as you will have to take back with care your cloth that is fallen on a thorny plant by removing the thorns one by one slowly, so also you will have to collect back with care and exertion the dissipated rays of the mind, that are thrown over the sensual objects for very many years.

If there is any inflammatory swelling on your back with throbbing pain, you do not experience any pain at night when you are asleep. Only when the mind is connected with the diseased part through nerves and thinking, you begin to experience pain. If you can consciously withdraw the mind from the diseased part by concentrating it on God or any other attractive object, you will not experience any pain even when you are wide awake. If you have a powerful will and strong Titiksha (power of endurance), then also you will not experience any pain. By constant thinking of any trouble or disease you only augment your pain and suffering.

7. Tap All Powers

1. In all man's struggles and attempts at achieving any desired end, there is in reality no necessity at all for him to go in quest of external forces to aid him. Man contains within himself vast resources, inherent power, lying untapped or else only partially made use of.
2. It is because he has allowed his faculties to get scattered on a hundred different things that he fails to achieve anything great despite his inherent potentialities. If he intelligently regulates and applies them, quick and concrete results will accrue.
3. To learn to rationally and effectively use the existing forces, man need not wait for any striking new methods, etc., to be invented, to guide him. Since the dawn of creation, nature herself abounds in instructive examples and lessons to aid man in every walk of his life. Observation will tell us that every force in nature, when allowed to flow loosely over a wide area, moves slowly and with comparatively less power than it would do if gathered together in one mass and directed through a single restricted outlet.
4. This gathering together of the scattered rays and bringing this force to bear upon a given point,—any object, idea or action—forms the process.
5. As examples of the power generated by a concentration of force are cited (1) the sluggish and leisurely flow of a river, damned and accumulated, rushes out with an amazing force through the sluice, (2) the phenomenon of ton-loads of cargo in heavy wagons being hauled or propelled by the power of steam concentrated in the boiler of the engine, (3) the most common domestic sight, the clattering and displacement of the covering lid of a cauldron when the latter commences to boil very much, (4) the normally warm sun-rays become suddenly so hot as to burn up objects when centralised and brought into focus through the lens. And the simple and commonest of action, where one unconsciously uses this principle, is noticed when a man wishing to hail another a good distance away, automatically cups his palms and shouts through them.
6. This law is equally applicable to man in all branches of his life's activities. With the utmost concentrated and careful

attention, the surgeon executes minute operations. The deepest absorption marks the state of the technician, the engineer, architect or the expert painter, engaged in drawing the minute details of a plan, chart or sketch, where accuracy is of paramount importance. A like concentration is displayed by the skilled Swiss workmen that fashion the delicate parts of watches and other scientific instruments. Thus in every art and science.

7. This is specially so in the spiritual line where the aspirant has to deal with forces internal. The powers of the mind are always scattered and resist attempts at concentration. This oscillatory tendency is an innate characteristic of the mind-stuff. Of the various methods employed to curtail and arrest this tossing of the mind, those using the medium of sound and sight, stand prominent, because these two have a peculiar knack of catching the attention of and stilling the mind. It is seen how a hypnotist gently subdues the mind of the 'subject' by making the latter gaze steadily into his (the hypnotist's) eyes and listen to the monotonous repetition of his steady, deliberate suggestions. We have still another clue to this when we note the mother gently croons the little child into slumber. Also the schoolmaster's sharp, "Now then, boys look here," whenever he desires them to pay special attention to what he is saying, is significant. He feels that by getting them to fix their gaze on him, he will draw the attention of their minds as well to his teaching.

Therefore in the course of spiritual discipline too, the methods of developing concentration take the form of gazing steadily at a dot, or at the symbol of the Pranava, or the Mantra or the figure of the favourite chosen deity. With some others it is done by the audible repetition of the Mantra or the Lord's name, or OM, or some select Kirtan tunes with regular rhythm and intonation. By these means the mind gradually gets indrawn and focussed. As this state deepens, the person slowly loses awareness of his surroundings. The concentration, when continued, leads to the state of Dhyana or meditation, when the practitioner tends to forget even that physical frame.

Meditation, when persisted in and perfected, brings about the experience of superconsciousness or Samadhi, the ultimate state of Self-awareness or Realisation.

8. Story of Concentration

Before you begin the practice of concentration you would do well to know something about the subconscious mind and its functions.

When the Chitta is confined and fixed to a certain point or object, this is called concentration. A great deal of your subconsciousness is but bundles of submerged experiences which can be brought to the surface of the conscious mind by means of concentration.

It is an admitted psychological fact that the mental processes by which you obtain knowledge are not merely confined to the field of consciousness but also cover the field of subconsciousness. If you know the technique of speaking to your subconscious mind and the art or science of extracting work from it just as you would speak to your servant or a dear old friend, then all knowledge will be yours. Yes, it is a question of practice, and practice will make you perfect.

When you are unable to solve some puzzles in metaphysics, science or philosophy, ask your subconscious mind to do the bit of work for you with the full trust and confidence and you are bound to get the right solution from it. Command your subconscious mind in the following manner: "Look here, you subconscious mind! I want the solution to this puzzle or problem very urgently tomorrow morning. Kindly do it quickly." Let your command be given in very clear terms, and let there be no ambiguity about it. You will positively get the answer from your subconscious mind the next morning. But sometimes the subconscious mind may be busy otherwise and in such cases you will have to wait for some days. You will have to repeat the same regularly every day at a fixed time.

All that you have inherited, all that you have brought with you through innumerable crores of births in the past, all that you have seen, heard, enjoyed, tasted, read or known either in this life or in past lives, are hidden in your subconscious mind. Why don't you master the technique of concentration and way of commanding your subconscious mind and make full free use of all that knowledge?

The subconscious mind is, as you have already known, your faithful servant. When at night you retire to bed with the thought that you should get up positively at 4 a.m., to either to catch a train or practise meditation, it is your subconscious mind that wakes you up at the exact hour. Even while you are fast asleep, your subconscious mind is at work. It has no rest at all. It arranges, analyses, compares, sorts all facts and figures, and finally carries out your commands.

Every action, every enjoyment or suffering and, in fact, all experiences leave in the camera-plate of your subconscious mind subtle impressions or residual potencies which are the root cause of future births, experiences of pleasure and pain, and death again. Revival or repetition of any action done in this life induces memory. But in the case of a developed Yogi, memory of previous lives also is brought about. He dives deep within and comes in actual contact with the Samskaras (subtle impressions) of past lives. He directly perceives them through his Yogic Vision. By means of Yogic Samyama (concentration, meditation and Samadhi practised at one and the same time), the Yogi gets full knowledge of past lives. By doing Samyama on the Samskaras of others, he gets knowledge of the past lives of others also. Wonderful are the powers of concentration!

Mind is a power born of Atman because it is through mind that God manifests Himself as the differentiated universe of names and forms. Mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts and habits. As the "I" thought is the root of all thoughts, mind is only the thought "I."

The brain is the seat of the mind in the waking state, the cerebellum in the dreaming state, and the heart in the deep sleep state. All objects you see about you, are nothing but mind only in form and in substance. Mind creates; mind destroys. A higher developed mind influences the lower minds. Telepathy, mind-reading, hypnotism, mesmerism, distant healing and so many other allied sciences bear testimony to the fact. Undoubtedly mind is the greatest power on earth. Control of mind bestows all powers.

Just as you take physical exercises, play games such as tennis and cricket in order to maintain physical health, you will have to maintain mental health also by taking Sattvic food, mental recreation of an innocent and harmless nature, change of thought, relaxation of mind by entertaining good, ennobling and sublime thoughts and by cultivating the habit of cheerfulness.

The nature of the mind is such that it becomes that which it intensely thinks upon. Thus, if you think of the vices and defects of another man, your mind will be charged with those defects and vices at least for the time being. He who knows this psychological law will never indulge in censuring others or in finding fault in the conduct of others. He will always praise others. He will only see the good in others. That is the way to grow in concentration, Yoga and spirituality.

Mind is atomic according to the Indian school of logic, all-pervading according to the Raja Yoga philosophy, and is of the same size as that of the body according to the Vedantic school.

Deep sleep is not a state of inactivity. In this state the causal body (Karana Sarira) functions vigorously. The associated consciousness, Prajna, is also present. The Jiva (individual soul) is almost in close contact with the Absolute. Just as a thin layer of muslin veils the face of a lady and renders it invisible to the eyes of her husband, so also a thin layer of ignorance separates the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. Students of Vedanta study this state deeply. It has deep philosophical significance. It gives the clue to trace the existence of the Atman. You rest in the warm bosom of the Mother of the world, Rajesvari who lovingly bestows upon you peace, refreshing vigour and strength to face the ensuing battle of daily life. But for this incomparable love and kindness of the merciful Mother during deep sleep, life would be wellnigh impossible on this physical plane where so many miseries, diseases, cares, worries, anxieties and fears of all sorts, torture and torment you every moment. How miserable, gloomy and depressed you feel, if you do not enjoy sound sleep even one night, if you happen to forego your sleep for three or four hours by attending a night's theatrical entertainment!

Great Yogis like Jnanadeva, Bhartrihari and Patanjali used to send and receive messages to and from distant persons through mind-telepathy (mental radio) and thought-transference. Telepathy was the first wireless telegraph and telephone service ever known to the world. Thought travels with tremendous velocity through space. Thought moves. It has weight, shape, size, form and colour. It is a dynamic force.

What is this world after all? It is nothing but the materialisation of the thought-forms of Hiranyagarbha or God. You have got waves of heat, light and electricity in science. There are also thought-waves in Yoga. Thought has tremendous power. Everybody is experiencing the power of thought unconsciously to a greater or lessor degree. If you have a comprehensive understanding of the working of the thought-vibrations, if you know the technique of controlling the thoughts, if you know the method of transmitting beneficial thoughts to others at a distance by forming clear-cut, well-defined, powerful thought-waves, you can use this thought-power a thousandfold more effectively. Thought works wonders. A wrong thought binds. A right thought liberates. Therefore, think rightly and attain freedom.

Dear child! Unfold the occult powers hidden within you by understanding and realising the powers of the mind. Close your eyes. Slowly concentrate. You can see distant objects, hear distant sounds, send messages to any part of not only this world but to other planets as well, heal persons thousands of miles off from you and move about to distant places in no time. Believe in the power of the mind. Interest, attention, will, faith and concentration will bring the desired fruit. Remember that mind is born of the Atman through His Maya (illusory Power).

Cosmic mind is universal mind. Cosmic mind is the sum total of all individual minds. Cosmic mind is Hiranyagarbha or Isvara or Karya Brahman. Man's mind is only a fragment of the universal mind. Learn to merge your little mind in the Cosmic Mind and get Omniscience and experience Cosmic Consciousness.

Keep a balanced mind always. This is a very important thing. It is no doubt a difficult practice, but you will have to do it, if you wish to succeed in concentration. Keeping the balance of mind in pleasure and in pain, in heat and in cold, in gain and in loss, in success and in failure, in praise and in censure, in respect and in disrespect, is real wisdom. This is very trying indeed, but if you are able to do this, you are a mighty potentate on earth. You are fit to be adored. You are the most wealthy man, though you are clad in loin-cloth, and though you have nothing to eat. You are very strong, though you have a dilapidated physical frame. Worldly people lose their balance even for trifling things. They get irritated and lose their temper quickly. Energy is wasted when one loses his temper. Those who want to develop balance of mind should develop discrimination and practise celibacy and concentration. Those who waste their semen get irritated very frequently. Control and concentration of mind is very difficult performance, for saint Thayumanavar[1] in his inimitable poem `Tejomayanandam' has written a beautiful verse on the difficulty of controlling the mind. This untranslatable piece roughly and freely translated means:

> "You can control a mad elephant;
> You can shut the mouth of the bear and the tiger;
> You can ride a lion;
> You can play with the cobra;
> By alchemy you can eke out your livelihood;
> You can wander through the universe incognito;
> You can make vassals of the gods;
> You can ever be youthful;
> You can walk on water;
> You can live in fire;
> You can achieve all Siddhis, seated in your home;
> But to be restful by control of the mind
> Is rare and difficult."

The senses are your real foes. They draw you out and perturb your peace of mind. Do not keep company with them. Subdue them. Restrain them. Curb them just as you would curb your enemies on the battlefield. This is not a day's work. It demands patient and protracted Sadhana for a very long time. Control of the senses is really control of the mind. All the ten senses must be controlled. Starve them to death. Do not give them what they want. Then they will obey your orders quite implicitly. All worldly-minded persons are slaves of their senses, though they are educated, though they possess immense wealth, though they hold judicial and executive powers. If you are a slave of meat-eating, for instance, you will begin to exercise control over your tongue the moment you give up the meat-eating habit entirely for six months. You will consciously feel that you have gained a little supremacy over this troublesome sense of taste which began to revolt against you some time ago.

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[1] Thayumanavar was a poet-saint who lived about 200 years ago in the district of Tanjore, South India. His songs on Vedanta are soul-inspiring and elevating. They penetrate deep into the hearts of the hearers. They are very, very popular in South India. They are pregnant with deep, subtle, philosophical thoughts.

Be cautious, vigilant and circumspect. Watch your mind and its modifications. Lord Jesus says, "Watch and pray." Watching the mind is introspection. One in a million does this beneficial and soul-elevating practice. People are immersed in worldliness. They madly run after money and women. They have no time to think of God and higher spiritual things. The sun dawns and the mind runs again in its old, usual, sensual grooves of eating, drinking, amusing and sleeping. The day has passed. In this way the whole life passes away. There is neither moral development nor spiritual progress. He who does daily introspection can find out his own defects and remove them by suitable methods and can have gradually a perfect control over the mind. He will not allow the intruders, lust, anger, greed, delusion and pride, to enter the mental factory. He can practise concentration uninterruptedly. Daily self-analysis and self-examination is another indispensable practice. Then only you can obviate your defects and grow rapidly in concentration. What does a gardener do? He watches the young plants carefully, removes the weeds daily, puts a strong fence around them and waters them daily at the proper time; and so they grow nicely and yield fruits quickly. Even so, you should find out your defects by introspection and self-analysis and eradicate them through suitable methods. If one method fails, you should take recourse to another. The practice demands patience, perseverance, leech-like tenacity, application, iron will, subtle intellect and courage. But the reward is invaluable. It is Immortality, Supreme Peace and Infinite Bliss!

You should try to possess a serene mind. You should practise serenity every moment of your Yogic career. If your mind is restless, you cannot make an iota of progress in concentration. Therefore the first and foremost thing that you should possess by all means is serenity of mind. Silent meditation in the morning, renunciation of desires, suitable diet, discipline of the senses, and observance of the vow of silence daily for about at least an hour will produce serenity. All vain habitual thoughts, wild fancies, wrong feelings, cares, worries, anxieties, confused ideas, and all kinds of imaginary fears must be done away with in toto. Then and then only you can hope to get a peaceful mind. The foundation in Yoga can well and truly be laid only if the aspirant possesses serenity to a maximum degree. Only a calm mind can grasp the truth, can see God or Atman, can receive the Divine Light. The spiritual experiences will be permanent, if you have a quiet mind. Otherwise they will come and go.

As soon as you wake up in the morning, pray fervently to the Lord, sing His Names, and meditate upon Him with all your heart from 4 to 6 a.m. Then make a determination: "I will observe celibacy today. I will speak the truth today. I will not hurt the feelings of others today. I will not lose my temper today." Watch your mind. Be resolute. You will surely succeed that day. Then continue the vow for the whole week. You will gain strength. Your will-power will develop. Then continue the vow for the whole month. Even if you commit some mistakes in the beginning, you need not be unnecessarily alarmed. Mistakes are your best teachers. You will not commit the same mistakes again. If you are earnest and sincere, the Lord will shower His Grace upon you. The Lord will give you strength to face the difficulties and troubles in the daily battle of life.

He who has controlled his mind is really happy and free. Physical freedom is no freedom at all. If you are easily carried away by surging emotions and impulses, if you are under the grip of moods, cravings and passions, how can you be really happy, O sweet beloved child! You are like a rudderless boat. You are tossed about hither and thither like a piece of straw in the vast expanse of the ocean. You laugh for five minutes and weep for five hours. What can wife, son, friends, money, fame and power do for you, when you are under the sway of the impulses of your mind? He is the true hero who has controlled his mind. There is an adage: "He who has controlled his mind has controlled the world." True victory is over the mind. That is real freedom. Thorough rigorous discipline and self-imposed restrictions will eventually eradicate all desires, thoughts, impulses, cravings and passions. Only then and not until then you can expect to be free from the thraldom of the mind. You should not give any leniency to the mind. The mind is a mischievous imp. Curb it by drastic measures. Become a perfect Yogi. Money cannot give you freedom. Freedom is not a commodity that can be purchased in the Crawford Market. It is a rare, hidden treasure guarded by a five-hooded serpent. Unless you kill or tame this serpent, you cannot have access to this treasure.

That treasure is Spiritual Wealth, that is Freedom, that is Bliss. The serpent is your mind. The five hoods are the five senses through which the mind-serpent hisses.

Rajasic mind always wants new things. It wants variety. It gets disgusted with monotony. It wants change of place, change of food, change, in short, of everything. But you should train the mind to stick to one thing. You should not complain of monotony. You should have patience, adamantine will, and untiring persistence. Then only you can succeed in Yoga. He who wants something new always is quite unfit for Yoga. You should stick to one place, one spiritual preceptor, one method, one system of Yoga. That is the way to positive success.

You should have real and intense thirst for God-realisation. Then all obstacles will be obviated. Concentration will be quite easy for you then. Mere emotional bubbling for the time being out of sheer curiosity or for attaining psychic powers cannot bring any tangible result.

If you are careless, if you are irregular in concentration, if your dispassion (Vairagya) wanes, if you give up practice for some days on account of laziness, the adverse forces will take you away from the true path of Yoga. You will be stranded. It will be difficult for you to rise up again to the original height. Therefore be regular in concentration.

Be cheerful and happy. Away with depression and gloom. There is nothing more infectious than depression. A depressed and gloomy man can radiate only unpleasant and morbid vibrations all around; he cannot radiate joy, love and peace. Therefore never come out of your room, if you are depressed and gloomy, lest you should spread the contagion all around you. Live only to be a blessing to others. Radiate joy, love and peace. Depression eats the very core of your being and havocs it like a canker. It is verily a deadly plague. Depression manifests on account of some disappointment or failure, severe dyspepsia or heated debates, wrong thinking or wrong feeling. Separate yourself from this negative feeling and identify yourself with the Supreme Being. Then no external influence can affect you. You will be invulnerable. Drive the feeling of depression and gloom at once by enquiry, singing divine songs, prayers, chanting of OM, Pranayama, a brisk walk in the open air, thinking of the opposite quality, viz., the feeling of joy. Try to be happy in all states and radiate joy only towards all around you.

Why do you weep my child? Remove the bandage from your eyes and see now. You are surrounded by truth and truth alone. All is Light and Bliss alone. The cataract of ignorance has blurred your vision. Extract the cataract immediately. Put on a new pair of glasses by developing the inner eye of wisdom through regular practice of concentration.

It is not thought alone that determines action. There are some intelligent people who think reasonably on the pros and cons of a thing but when the time comes they are led astray by temptations. They do wrong actions and repent later on. It is the feeling that really goads man to action. Some psychologists lay special stress on imagination and say that it is imagination that really determines action. They bring the following illustrations in support of their view. Suppose a long plank 1 ft. broad is placed between two turrets each 20 ft. high. When you begin to walk on this plank, you imagine that you will fall down, and so you actually fall down, whereas you are able to walk on the same plank when placed on the ground. Suppose you go on a bicycle along a narrow lane. You see a big stone on the way. You imagine that you will hit the cycle against the stone; and so you actually run the cycle against the stone. Some other psychologists say that it is the will that determines an action. Will can do everything. Will is soul-force. Vedantins are of this latter opinion.

Now to come back to the subject of concentration proper, the waves in the mind caused by thought-forms are called Vrittis. These waves must be stilled or stopped. Then only you can realise the Soul. A well-trained mind can be fixed at will upon any object either inside or outside to the exclusion of all else. The practice of concentration is a bit disgusting in the beginning but will give you immense happiness after some time. Patience and perseverance are essential. Regularity is also necessary. The mind is compared in the Hindu Sastras to a lake or ocean. The thoughts arising from the mind are compared to the waves of the ocean. You can see your reflection clearly on the waters of the ocean only when all the waves on the surface subside completely and become still. So also you can realise the Soul, the Light of lights, only when all the thought-waves in the mind-lake are stilled.

If you take interest in the practice of concentration, and if you have a definite purpose, you will have remarkable progress in concentration. The neophyte will find great interest in the practice, when he gets some psychic experiences such as brilliant lights, hearing of celestial sounds, smelling of rare scents, and so on, and when he begins to think of the prospects of becoming a fully developed Yogi.

Some people can concentrate on pleasant or interesting objects only. If they can create interest in unpleasant things also, they can do good concentration on uninteresting things as well. When the rays of the mind are gathered and collected by practice, the mind becomes concentrated and you get Ananda from within. The sum total of pleasures of the whole world is nothing when compared to the bliss derived through concentration and meditation. Do not give up the practice of concentration at any cost. Plod on. Have patience, perseverance, cheerfulness, tenacity and application. You will eventually succeed. *Nil desperandum.* Sri Sankaracharya writes in his commentary on the Chhandogya Upanishad: "A man's duty consists in the control of the senses and concentration of the mind" (Ch. VII-xxi-1). Find out by serious introspection the various impediments that act as stumbling blocks in your concentration and remove them with effort one by one. Do not allow new thoughts (Sankalpas) and desires (Vasanas) to crop up. Nip them in the bud through discrimination, enquiry, concentration and meditation.

Everybody does concentrate to a certain extent, when he reads a book, when he writes a letter, when he plays tennis and in fact, when he does any kind of work. But for spiritual purposes, concentration should be developed to an infinite degree. The mind is like an unchained monkey. It has the power of attending to one object only at a time, although it is able to pass from one object to another with tremendous speed, so rapidly, in fact, that some hold that it could grasp several things at a time. But the best philosophers and seers, Eastern and Western, hold to the "Single idea" theory as being correct. It agrees with one's experience as well. The mind is ever restless. This is due to the force of Rajas and passion. Concentration is necessary for success in material affairs. A man with an appreciable degree of concentration has more earning capacity and turns out more work in less time. Need I say that the Yogic student will be amply rewarded for his effort in concentration?

When you study a book, focus your whole mind on the subject in hand. Do not allow the mind to see any external object or hear any sound. Collect all the dissipated rays of the mind. Develop the power of attention. Attention, as I have said somewhere in the beginning, plays no inconspicuous part in concentration. Concentration is, in fact, the narrowing of the field of attention. It is one of the signs of a trained will. It is found in men of strong personality.

Practise attention on unpleasant tasks which you have been shrinking (on account of their unpleasantness). Throw interest upon uninteresting objects and ideas. Hold them on before your mind. Interest will slowly manifest. Many mental weaknesses will vanish. The mind will become stronger and stronger. The force wherewith anything strikes the mind is generally in proportion to the degree of attention bestowed upon it. Moreover, the great art of memory is attention, and inattentive people have bad memories.

There is a great concentration, when you play cards or chess, but the mind is not filled with pure and divine thoughts. The mental contents are of an undesirable nature. You can hardly experience the Divine thrill, ecstasy and elevation of mind, when it is filled with impure thoughts. Every object has its own mental associations. You will have to fill up the mind with sublime spiritual thoughts. Then only the mind will be expurgated of all worldly thoughts. The picture of Lord Jesus or Buddha or Krishna is associated with sublime, soul-stirring ideas; chess and cards are associated with ideas of gambling, cheating and so forth.

The invocation of shadow gives the objects seen as well as unseen. Undoubtedly a man becomes pure by its very sight. The shadow can also answer any question you may desire to ask. The Yogic practitioner who is able to see his own reflection in the sky will be able to know whether his undertakings will be crowned with success or not. Those Yogis who have realised the benefits of concentration fully have declared, "In a clear sunlit sky behold with a steady gaze your reflection; whenever this is seen for a single second in the sky, you behold God at once in the sky." He who daily sees his shadow in the sky will acquire longevity. He will never meet with accidental death.

When the shadow is seen fully reflected, then the Yogic practitioner gets victory and success. He conquers Prana and goes everywhere. The practice is simple enough. One realises the fruits in a short time. Some have realised the fruits in one or two weeks. When the sun rises, stand in such a way that your body casts a shadow upon the ground and you are able to see it without difficulty. Then steadily fix your gaze on the neck of the shadow for some time and then look up into the sky. If you see a full grey shadow in the sky, it is very auspicious. The shadow will answer any question for you. If you do not get the shadow, continue the practice till you get it. You can practise this in the moonlight also.

Some people feel intense pain and agony when they suffer from disease in some part of the body. The reason is not far to seek. They always think of the disease and do not know how to take the mind away from the affected part of the body by the practice of abstraction and fixing the mind on some other object. Some people feel less pain than others. Such people know how to divert the mind from the seat of disease. Whenever there is pain in the body, practise concentration on your tutelary deity, or study some philosophical books. The pain will vanish.

Concentration is purely a mental process. It needs an inward turning of the mind. It is not a muscular exercise. There should be no undue strain on the brain. You should not fight and wrestle with the mind violently.

Sit in a comfortable pose. Relax all the muscles of the body. There should neither be muscular nor emotional nor nervous nor mental faculties. Still the mind. Silence the bubbling thoughts. Calm the emotions. Put a break on the thought-process. Do not pay any attention to the intruding thoughts. Give the suggestion to the mind: "I do not care whether they are there or not." In other words, be indifferent. The intruding thoughts will quit the mental factory soon. They will not cause any trouble. This is the secret of mental discipline. Improvement in concentration will be visible only little by little. Do not be discouraged on any account. Be regular in your practice. Stop not the practice even for a single day. Lord Jesus says, "Empty thyself and I shall fill thee." This process of emptying all thoughts should be attempted after you have attained some power of concentration. Keep yourself in a positive state always. When you wish to concentrate on a piece of work to be done with care, you can use all your will and imagination also. Imagination helps even concentration.

Too much physical exertion, too much talking, too much eating, too much mixing with ladies and undesirable persons, too much walking, cause distraction of mind. Those who practise concentration must abandon these things. Whatever work you do, do it with perfect concentration. Never leave the work without finishing it completely.

Celibacy, Pranayama, reduction of wants and activities, renunciation of objects, solitude, silence, discipline of the senses, annihilation of lust and greed, control of anger, non-mixing with undesirable persons, giving up newspaper-reading and visiting cinemas—all these pave a long way in increasing the power of concentration.

Even if the mind runs out during concentration, do not bother. Let it run. Slowly bring it to your object of concentration. In the beginning the mind may run 50 times; two years of practice will reduce the number to 20; another three years of continued and persistent practice will reduce the number to nil. The mind then will be completely fixed on the divine consciousness. Then it will not run out even if you try to bring it out. This is the practical experience of those who have gained complete mastery over the minds.

Arjuna had wonderful concentration. He learnt the science of archery from Dronacharya. A dead bird was tied to a post in such a way that its reflection was cast in a basin of water right below on the ground. Arjuna saw the reflection of the bird in the basin of water and aimed successfully in hitting at the right eye of the actual bird tied to the post above.

Napoleon also had remarkable power of concentration. It is said that he had full control over his thoughts. He could draw one thought from a pigeon-hole of his brain, dwell on that single thought as long as he liked and then shove that thought back into the pigeon-hole. He had a peculiar brain with peculiar pigeon-holes.

When you study a book with profound interest, you do not hear or see a man shouting or calling you by your name. You do not smell the sweet fragrance of flowers kept on the table by your side. This is concentration. This is one-pointedness of mind (Chitta-Ekagrata). The mind is fixed firmly on one thing only. Such must be the depth and intensity of your concentration, when you think of God or Atman. It is easy to concentrate the mind on worldly objects because the mind takes interest in them very naturally through force of habit. The grooves are already cut in the brain. You will have to create new grooves by fixing the mind again and again on God. After some time the mind will not move to external objects, for it experiences joy and bliss within.

Some western psychologists hold: "The mind that wanders aimlessly can be made to move in a small limited circle only by the practice of concentration. It cannot be fixed on one point only. If it is fixed on one point only, then inhibition of the mind will take place. There is death for the mind. Nothing can be achieved when there is inhibition of the mind. So there is no use inhibiting the mind." This is not right. Complete control of the mind can be attained when all the thought-waves are extirpated thoroughly. The Yogi works wonders by his one-pointedness of mind. He knows the hidden treasures of the soul with the help of the mighty all-penetrating search-light generated by the one-pointedness of mind. After one-pointedness (Ekagrata) is attained, you have to achieve full restraint (Nirodha). In this state all modifications subside completely. The mind becomes quite blank. Then the Yogi destroys the blank mind also by identifying himself with the Supreme Purusha or Soul or Being from whom the mind borrows its light. Then he obtains omniscience and final emancipation (Kaivalya). These are matters that are Greek and Latin to our western psychologists. Hence they grope in darkness. They have no idea of the Purusha who witnesses the activities of the mind.

Man is a complex social animal. He is a biological organism and so he is definitely characterised by the possession of certain physiological functions such as circulation of blood, digestion, respiration, excretion, etc. He is also definitely characterised by the possession of certain psychological functions such as thinking, perception, memory, imagination, etc. He sees, thinks, tastes, smells and feels. Philosophically speaking, he is the image of God, nay he is God himself. He lost his divine glory by tasting the fruit of the forbidden tree. He can regain his lost divinity by mental discipline and the practice of concentration.

9. Yoga Prasnottari

Q. On what can one concentrate?

A. Concentrate on a concrete form in the beginning, on the form of Lord Krishna with flute in hand or on the form of Lord Vishnu with conch, disc, mace and lotus in the four hands.

Q. One man told me to look constantly in a mirror on a point in the mid-space between the two eyebrows in the reflection of my face. Can I do so?

A. You can. This is one way of concentration. But stick to one method, to Rama's picture only. You can spiritually grow when you concentrate on His divine form and meditate on His qualities.

Q. Why people concentrate on Saligram?

A. It has got a power to induce concentration easily.

Q. I am concentrating on Trikuti, on OM figure and on sound. Am I right in my concentration?

A. You are right. Associate the idea of purity, Sat, Chit, Ananda, perfection, etc., with OM. Feel you are all-pervading consciousness. This kind of Bhava is necessary.

Q. What should I do to have deep concentration of mind?

A. Develop intense mental Vairagya. Increase the time of practice. Sit alone. Do not mix with undesirable persons. Observe Mouna for three hours. Take milk and fruits at night. You will have deep concentration of mind, I assure you.

Q. The disciple needs words of encouragement. Often he wants to be in touch with his Guru. That is why I disturb you always. May I enquire now how the power of concentration increases?

A. You can write to me often. Disturbance concerns the mind. There is always peace for one who lives in the Atman which transcends the mind. Disturbances, troubles and afflictions can hardly touch such a person who lives in the spirit. Concentration increases by curtailing your wants and desires, by observing Mouna (silence) for two hours daily, by remaining in seclusion in a quiet room for one or two hours daily, by practising Pranayama, by prayer, by increasing the number of sittings in meditation in the evening and at night, by Vichara, etc.

Q. Can Japa bring about concentration?

A. Yes. Do Manasika Japa.

Q. When I try to concentrate on the Trikuti, I get a slight headache. Is there any remedy?

A. Do not struggle with the mind. Do not make a violent effort when you concentrate. Relax all nerves, muscles and brain. Do gentle concentration in a natural manner. This will remove undue strain and consequent headache.

Q. The mind is still fickle in me and flesh is weak. Attempts at concentration are sometimes successful, but often end in disappointment. The purification of mind is not easy. What do you suggest?

A. Your Vairagya is not intense. Develop Vairagya. Do intense Sadhana. Increase the period of meditation to 4 hours. Reduce your Vyavahara (activity). Go for seclusion for 3 months either to Rishikesh or Uttarakasi. Observe Mouna for full three months. You will have wonderful concentration and meditation.

Q. Why does the Yogi who does the Sakti-Sanchara on his disciple ask him to give up all other kinds of Sadhana?

A. To develop intense faith, steadiness on the path and one-pointed or single-minded devotion in one form of Yoga.

Q. I am doing Japa for two hours daily and Pranayama for half an hour. Can I have Ekagrata and Tanmayata in 2 or 3 years?

A. Yes. You can, if you are pure and sincere in your Sadhana.

CHAPTER TWO

PRACTICE OF CONCENTRATION

1. Attention

You must evince good interest in the practice of concentration. Then only your whole attention will be directed towards the object upon which you wish to concentrate. There can be really no concentration without a remarkable degree of interest and attention shown by the practitioner. You must, therefore, know what these two words mean.

Attention is steady application of the mind. It is focussing of consciousness on some chosen object. Through attention you can develop your mental faculties and capacities. Where there is attention, there is also concentration. Attention should be cultivated gradually. It is not a special process. It is the whole mental process in one of its aspects.

Perception always involves attention. To perceive is to attend. Through attention you get a clear and distinct knowledge of objects. The entire energy is focussed on the object towards which attention is directed. Full and complete information is gained. During attention all the dissipated rays of the mind are collected. There is effort or struggle in attention. Through attention a deeper impression of anything is made in the mind. If you have good attention, you can attend to the matter in hand exclusively. An attentive man has very good memory. He is very vigilant and circumspect. He is nimble and alert.

Attention plays a very great part in concentration. It is the basis of the will. When it is properly guided and directed towards the internal world for the purpose of introspection, it will analyse the mind and illumine very many astounding facts for you.

Attention is focussing of consciousness. Attention (Avadhana) plays a conspicuous part in concentration. It is one of the signs of trained will. It is found in men of strong mentality. It is a rare faculty. Brahmacharya wonderfully develops this power. A Yogi who possesses this faculty can even fix the mind on an unpleasant object for a very long time. It is easy to fasten the mind on an object which the mind likes best. Attention can be cultivated and developed by persistent practice. All the great men of the world who have achieved greatness have risen up through this faculty.

Throw your entire attention into whatever you happen to be doing at the moment. Practise attention on unpleasant tasks from which you have been shrinking before on account of their unpleasantness. Throw interest upon uninteresting objects and ideas. Hold them on before your mind. Interest will slowly manifest. Many mental weakness will vanish. The mind will become stronger and stronger.

The force wherewith anything strikes the mind, is generally in proportion to the degree of attention bestowed upon it. Moreover the great art of memory is attention; inattentive people have bad memories.

The human mind has the power of attending to only one object at a time, although it is able to pass from one object to another with a marvellous degree of speed, so rapidly in fact, that some have held that it could grasp several things at a time. But the best authorities, eastern and western, hold to the "single idea" theory as being correct. It agrees with one's daily experience also.

If you analyse carefully the mental functions or operations, no one process can be singled out and called attention. It is not possible to separate attention as a distinct function. You observe something; therefore you are attentive.

Attention belongs to every state of consciousness and is present in every field of consciousness. An attentive student in the spiritual path can do hearing (Sravana) of the Srutis in an efficient manner. The military officer says "attention," and the soldier is ready with his gun to carry out his behests. An attentive soldier alone can hit the mark. No one can get success either in temporal or spiritual pursuits without attention.

There are Yogis who can do eight or ten or even hundred things at a time. This is not strange. The whole secret lies in the fact that they have developed their attention to a remarkable degree. All the great men of the world do possess this faculty in varying degrees.

Attention is of two kinds, viz., external attention and internal attention. When the attention is directed towards external objects, it is called external attention. When it is directed internally within the mind upon mental objects and ideas, it is known as internal attention.

There are again two other kinds of attention viz., voluntary attention and involuntary attention. When the attention is directed towards some external objects by an effort of the will, it is called voluntary attention. When you have an express volition to attend to this or that, it is called voluntary attention. The man understands why he perceives. Some deliberate intention, incentive, goal or purpose is definitely involved. Voluntary attention needs effort, will, determination and some mental training. This is cultivated by practice and perseverance. The benefits derived by the practice of attention are incalculable. Involuntary attention is quite common. This does not demand any practice. There is no effort of the will. The attention is induced by the beauty and attractive nature of the object. Individuals perceive without knowing why and without observed instruction. Young children possess this power of involuntary attention to a greater degree than grown up people.

If a man is not observant, he is not attentive. If he observes something, he is said to be attentive. Intention, purpose, hope, expectation, desire, belief, wish, knowledge, aim, goal and needs serve to determine attention. You will have to note carefully the degree, duration, range, forms, fluctuations and conflicts of attention.

There is great attention, if the object is very pleasing. You will have to create interest. Then there will be attention. If the attention gets diminished, change your attention to another pleasant object. By patient training you can direct the mind to attend to an unpleasant object also by creating interest. Then your will will grow strong.

If you closely watch, you will note that you observe different objects at different times. This perception of now one object and now another, when the physical conditions are constant, is known as fluctuation of attention. Attention is changing. The objects themselves change or fluctuate but there is no fluctuation in the observing individual himself. The mind has not been trained to bear prolonged attention. It gets disgusted through monotony and wants to run towards some other pleasing object. You may say, "I am going to attend to one thing only," but you will soon find that even though you attempt very hard, you suddenly perceive something else. The attention wavers.

Interest develops attention. It is difficult to fix the mind on an uninteresting object. When a professor is lecturing, when the subject is abstract and metaphysical, many people leave the hall quietly because they cannot attend to a subject which is not interesting. But if the same professor sings and tells some interesting and thrilling stories, all people hear him with rapt attention. There is pindrop silence. Lecturers should know the art of attracting the minds of hearers. They will have to change the tone to talk with force and emphasis. They will have to watch the audience and see whether they are attentive or not. They will have to change the subject-matter for a short while and bring in some nice stories and suitable illustrations. They will have to look at the hearers directly in their eyes. So many things are necessary if one wants to become a successful lecturer, if one wants to make the hearers attentive.

Napoleon, Gladstone, Arjuna and Jnanadeva had all wonderful power of attention. They could fix their minds on any object. All scientists and occultists possess attention to a remarkable degree. They cultivate it by patient, regular and systematic practice. A judge and a surgeon can get positive success in their respective professions only if they are endowed with the power of attention to a high degree.

When you do any work, plunge yourself in it. Forget yourself. Lose the self. Concentrate upon the work. Shut out all other thoughts. When you do one thing, do not think of any other thing. When you study one book, do not think of any other book. Fix the mind there steadily like the arrow-maker who had no consciousness of his surroundings. Eminent scientists are so busy and attentive in their experiments and researches in their laboratories that they forget to take food even for days together. Once a scientist was very busy at his work. His wife who was living in another district had a serious calamity. She came running up to him to the laboratory with profuse tears in her eyes. Strange to say, the scientist was not a bit agitated. He was so very attentive at his work that he even forgot that she was his own wife. He said, "Madam! weep for some more time. Let me make chemical analysis of your tears."

Once some gentleman invited Sir Isaac Newton for dinner. Newton repaired to his host's bungalow and took his seat in the drawing room. The gentleman forgot all about Newton, took his dinner and retired to his bed. Newton was amusing within himself very absorbedly on some important point of science. He did not stir from his seat. He forgot all about his dinner and remained in the same chair like a statue for a long time. The next morning the host saw Newton in the drawing-room and then only remembered his having invited him for dinner. He felt sorry for his forgetfulness and apologised to Sir Isaac in a meek voice. What a wonderful power of attention Sir Isaac Newton had! All geniuses possess this power to an infinite degree.

According to Prof. James we attend to things because they are very interesting. But Prof. Pillsbury is of the opinion that things are interesting because we attend to them or because we are likely to attend to them. We do not attend to them if they are not interesting.

By constant practice and ever-renewed effort of attention a subject that, in the beginning, was dry and uninteresting may become full of interest when you master it and learn its meaning and its issues. The power of concentrating your attention on the subject may become stronger.

When a great misfortune has befallen you, or when you pass in review a certain course of conduct in order to find out the cause of failure, it may take possession of your mind to such a degree that no effort of the will can make you cease from thinking over it. An article has to be written, a book is in the process of preparation; the work is carried on even if there is loss of sleep, and you are unable to tear yourself away from it. The attention which began voluntarily has taken entire hold of the field of consciousness.

If you possess strong power of attention, anything that the mind receives will be deeply impressed. An attentive man only can develop his will. A mixture of attention, application and interest can work wonders. There is no doubt of this. A man of ordinary intellect with highly developed attention can turn out more work than a highly intellectual man who has a poor attention. Failure in anything is mainly due to lack of attention. If you attend to one thing at a time, you will get profound knowledge of that subject in its various aspects. The ordinary untrained man of the world generally attends to several things at a time. He allows many things to enter the gates of his mental factory. That is the reason why he has a clouded or turbid mind. There is no clarity of thought. He cannot do the process of analysis and synthesis. He is bewildered. He cannot express his ideas clearly, whereas the disciplined man can attend to a subject exclusively as long as he likes. He extracts full and detailed information about one subject or object and then takes up another. Attention is an important faculty of a Yogi.

You cannot attend to two different objects at a time. Mind can do only one thing at a time. Because it moves with such a tremendous velocity backwards and forwards, you think that the mind can attend to several objects or things at a time. You can only see or hear at a time. You cannot see and hear at the same time. But this law is not applicable to a developed Yogi. A developed Yogi can do several things at a time because his will is not separate from the Cosmic Will which is all-powerful.

2. Practice of Concentration

Fix the mind on some object either within the body or without. Keep it there steadily for some time. This is concentration. You will have to practise this daily.

Purify the mind first through the practice of right conduct and then take to the practice of concentration. Concentration without purity of mind is of no avail. There are some occultists who have concentration. But they have no good character; that is the reason why they do not make any progress in the spiritual life.

He who has a steady posture and has purified his nerves and the vital sheath by the constant practice of control of breath will be able to concentrate easily. Concentration will be intense if you remove all distractions. A true celibate who has preserved his energy will have wonderful concentration.

Some foolish, impatient students take to concentration at once without undergoing, in any manner, any preliminary training in ethics. This is a serious blunder. Ethical perfection is a matter of paramount importance.

You can concentrate internally on any of the seven centres of spiritual energy. Attention plays a very prominent part in concentration. He who has developed his powers of attention will have good concentration. A man who is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any subject or object even for a second. His mind will be jumping like an old monkey.

He who has gained abstraction (withdrawing the senses from the objects) will have good concentration. You will have to march on in the spiritual path step by step and stage by stage. Lay the foundation of right conduct, postures, regulation of breath and abstraction to start with. The superstructure of concentration and meditation will be successful then only.

You should be able to visualise the object of concentration very clearly even in its absence. You will have to call up the mental picture at a moment's notice. If you have concentration you can do this without much difficulty. In the beginning stage of practice, you can concentrate on the 'tic-tic' sound of a watch or on the flame of a candle or any other object that is pleasing to the mind. This is concrete concentration. There is no concentration without something to rest the mind upon. The mind can be fixed on any object in the beginning which is pleasant. It is very difficult to fix the mind, in the beginning, on an object which the mind dislikes.

Sit in lotus-pose (Padmasana) with crossed legs. Fix the gaze on the tip of the nose. This is called the nasal gaze. Do not make any violent effort. Gently look at the tip of the nose. Practise for one minute in the beginning. Gradually increase the time to half an hour or more. This practice steadies the mind. It develops the power of concentration. Even when you walk, you can keep up this practice. Sit on lotus-pose and practise fixing the mind between the two eyebrows. Do this gently for half a minute. Then gradually increase the time to half an hour or more. There must not be the least violence in the practice. This removes tossing of mind and develops concentration. This is known as frontal gaze. The eyes are directed towards the frontal bone of the forehead. You can select either the nasal gaze or the frontal gaze according to your taste, temperament and capacity.

If you want to increase your power of concentration you will have to reduce your worldly activities. You will have to observe the vow of silence every day for two hours or more.

Practise concentration till the mind is well established on the object of concentration. When the mind runs away from the object bring it back again.

When concentration is deep and intense all other senses cannot operate. He who practises concentration for three hours daily will have tremendous psychic power. He will have a strong will-power.

3. Concentration in Every Walk of Life

Concentration is a very important qualification for a beginner in the spiritual path. Concentration is required not only in the spiritual path but also in every walk of life. A man without concentration is a failure in life.

Concentration in a spiritual sense means the one-pointedness of the mind. It is the fixing of one's mind on the Ishta Devata or the deity of one's choice. To attain concentration you should drive off all useless thoughts of the world. You must be entirely free from all base desires of a worldly nature. You should substitute divine thoughts in their stead.

Meditation follows concentration. Samadhi follows meditation. Jivanmukti state follows the attainment of Nirvikalpa Samadhi which is free from all thoughts of duality. Jivanmukti leads to emancipation from the wheel of birth and death. Therefore concentration is the first and foremost thing a Sadhaka or aspirant should acquire in the spiritual path.

Every little act demands concentration and your whole-hearted attention. If you want to pass a thread through the eye of the needle you must remove all fibres that are disjointed. Then you must make it a single fibre and with great care and one-pointed thought pass the thread into the needle.

When you climb a mountain or get down a steep descent you will have to be very careful. Otherwise you will have a slip and fall into the deep abyss below. When you ride a bicycle, you talk to your friends on the road, a motor-car will dash against you from behind. If you are a bit absent-minded when you walk on the road, you will strike against a stone and fall down. A careless barber will cut the nose of his customer. A careless washerman will burn the clothes of his master. A sleepy aspirant will dash his head against the wall or fall down prostrate on the ground. Therefore you must develop attention. Attention leads to concentration.

Fix your mind on the work at hand. Give your complete heart and soul to it. Let it be even a small work like peeling off the skin on a plantain fruit or squeezing a lemon. Never do anything haphazardly. Never take your meals in haste. Be calm and patient in all your actions. Never arrive at hasty conclusions. Never do a thing in haste. No work can be done successfully without calmness and concentration. Those who have attained success and become great have all possessed this indispensable virtue.

You will be successful in every attempt. You will never meet with failure if you can do your work with perfect attention and concentration. When you sit for prayers and meditation never think of your office-work. When you work in the office never think of the child who is sick or any other household work. When you take bath do not think of games. When you sit for meals do not think of the work that is pending in the office. You must train yourself to attend to the work on hand with perfect one-pointedness. You can easily develop your will-power and memory. Concentration is the master-key to open the gates of victory. If an ordinary man takes one hour to do a work, a man of good concentration will accomplish it in half an hour with better efficiency than the former. You will become a mighty man.

You must know very well the science of relaxation of the mind. You must be able to eliminate all other thoughts from the mind. You must think of rest only. You should consider yourself as if you were dead. Mentally repeat the names of the Lord and think of the Ananda aspect of His attribute. You will not have dreams. You will rest in blissful sleep. You will be refreshed very easily. Even if you sleep for two hours you would feel quite refreshed.

4. Gist of Yoga of Concentration

It is very difficult to say where concentration ends and meditation begins. Meditation follows concentration. Purify the mind first through the practice of Yama and Niyama. Then take to the practice of Dharana. Concentration without purity is of no use.

Concentration is steadfastness of mind. If you remove all causes of distraction, your power of concentration will increase. A true Brahmachari who has preserved his Virya will have powerful concentration. Attention plays a prominent part in concentration. He who has developed his power of attention will have good concentration. You should be able to visualise very clearly the object of concentration even in its absence. You must call up the mental picture in a moment's notice. If you have good practice in concentration you can do this without difficulty. He who has gained success in Pratyahara (abstraction) by withdrawing the Indriyas from the various objects will have good concentration. You will have to march in the spiritual path step by step, stage by stage. Lay the foundation of Yama (right conduct), Niyama, Asana (posture), Pranayama and Pratyahara to start with. The superstructure of Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi will be successful then only.

Asana is Bahiranga Sadhana (external); Dhyana is Antaranga Sadhana (internal). When compared with Dhyana and Samadhi, even Dharana is Bahiranga Sadhana. He who has steady Asana and has purified Yoga-Nadis and the Pranamaya Kosha (vital sheath) through Pranayama will be able to concentrate easily. You can concentrate internally on any of the seven plexus or Chakras or centres of spiritual energy viz., Muladhara, Svadhishthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha, Ajna and Sahasrara, or on the tip of the nose, or on the tip of the tongue or externally on the picture of any Devata, Hari, Hara, Krishna or Devi. You can concentrate on the 'tik-tik' sound of a watch or on the flame of a candle, or on a black point of a wall, or on a pencil or rose flower or any pleasing object. This is concrete concentration (Sthoola). There can be no concentration without something upon which the mind may rest. The mind can be fixed easily on a pleasing object such as jasmine flower, mango or orange or a loving friend. It is difficult to fix the mind in the beginning on any object which it dislikes such as faecal matter, cobra, enemy, ugly face, etc. Practise concentration till the mind is well established in the object of concentration. When the mind runs away from the object of concentration, bring it back again and again to the object. Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "*Yato yato nischarati manas-chanchalam-asthiram, Tatastato niyamyaitad-atmanyeva vasam nayet*—As often as the wavering and unsteady mind goes forth, so often reining it in, let him bring it under the control of the Self."

If you want to increase your power of concentration, you will have to reduce your worldly activities (Vyavahara-Kshaya). You will have to observe Mouna (vow of silence) also for two hours daily. A man whose mind is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any object even for a second. His mind will be jumping like a balloon. Regulate and master the breath. Subdue the senses and fix the mind on any pleasing object. Associate the ideas of holiness and purity with the object.

You can concentrate on the space between the two eyebrows (Trikuti). You can concentrate on the mystic sounds (Anahata Dhvani) that you hear from your right ear. You can concentrate on 'Om' picture. The picture of Lord Krishna with flute in hand and the picture of Lord Vishnu with conch, discus, mace and lotus are very good for concentration. You can concentrate on the picture of your Guru or any saint. Vedantins try to fix the mind on Atman, the Inner Self. This is their Dharana.

Dharana is the Sixth stage or limb of Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi. In Dharana you will have only one Vritti or wave in the mind-lake. The mind assumes the form of only one object. All other operations of the mind are suspended or stopped. He who can practise real concentration for half or one hour will have tremendous psychic powers. His will also will be very powerful.

When Hatha Yogis concentrate their minds on Shadadhara or the six supports (the Shat-Chakras), they concentrate their minds on the respective presiding Devatas also, viz., Ganesha, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Isvara and Sadasiva. Control the breath through Pranayama. Subdue the Indriyas through Pratyahara. And then fix the mind either on Saguna or Nirguna Brahman. According to the Hatha Yogic School, a Yogi who can suspend his breath by Kumbhaka for 20 minutes can have very good Dharana. He will have a very tranquil mind. Pranayama steadies the mind, removes Vikshepa (distraction) and increases the power of concentration. Those who practise Khechari Mudra by cutting the *frenum lingua* and lengthening the tongue and fixing it in the hole beyond the palate by taking upwards, will have good Dharana.

Those who can practise concentration evolve quickly. They can do any work with scientific accuracy and great efficiency. What others do in six hours can be done by one who has concentration within half an hour. What others can read in six hours, can be read by one who has concentration within half an hour. Concentration purifies and calms the surging emotions, strengthens the current of thought and clarifies the ideas. Concentration helps a man in his material progress also. He will have a very good outturn of work in his office or business-house. What was cloudy and hazy before becomes clear and definite. What was difficult before becomes easy now and what was complex, bewildering and confusing before comes easily within the mental grasp. You can achieve anything through concentration. Nothing is impossible to a man who practises regular concentration. It is very difficult to practise concentration when one is hungry and when one is suffering from an acute disease. He who practises concentration will possess very good health and very clear mental vision.

Retire into a quiet room; sit in Padmasana. Close your eyes. See what happens when you concentrate on an apple. You may think of its colour, shape, size and its different parts such as skin, pulp, seeds, etc. You may think of the places (Australia or Kashmir) wherefrom it is imported. You may think of its acidic or sweet taste and its effects on the digestive system and blood. Through law of association, ideas of some other fruits also may try to enter. The mind may entertain some other extraneous ideas. It may begin to wander about. It may think of meeting a friend at the railway station at 4 p.m. It may think of purchasing a towel or a tin of tea and biscuits. It may ponder over some unpleasant happening that occurred the previous day. You must try to have a definite line of thought. There must not be any break in the line of thinking. You must not allow other thoughts which are not connected with the object on hand to enter. You will have to struggle hard to get success in this direction. The mind will try its level best to run in the old grooves and take its old familiar road or old beaten path. The attempt is somewhat like going uphill. You will rejoice when you get even some success in concentration. Just as laws of gravitation, cohesion, etc., operate in the physical plane, so also definite laws of thought, such as law of continuity, etc., operate in the mental plane or thought-world. Those who practise concentration should thoroughly understand these laws. When the mind thinks of an object, it may think of its qualities and its parts also. When it thinks of a cause, it may think of its effect also.

If you read with concentration the Bhagavad-Gita, the Ramayana, or the 11th Skandha of Bhagavata several times you will get new ideas each time. Through concentration you will get penetrative insight. Subtle esoteric meanings will flash out in the field of mental consciousness. You will understand the inner depths of philosophical significance. When you concentrate on any object do not wrestle with the mind. Avoid tension anywhere in the body or mind. Think gently of the object in a continuous manner. Do not allow the mind to wander away.

If emotions disturb you during concentration, do not mind them. They will pass away soon. If you try to drive them, you will have to tax your will-force. Have an indifferent attitude. The Vedantin uses the formulae: "I don't care. Get out. I am Sakshi (witness of the mental modifications)," to drive the emotions. The Bhakta simply prays and help comes from God.

Train the mind in concentration on various subjects, gross and subtle, and of various sizes, medium and big. In course of time a strong habit of concentration will be formed. The moment you sit for concentration the mood will come at once quite easily. When you read a book, you must read it with concentration. There is no use skipping over the pages in a hurried manner. Read one page in the Gita. Close the book. Concentrate on what you have read. Find out parallel lines in the Mahabharata, the Upanishads and the Bhagavata. Compare and contrast.

For a neophyte, the practice of concentration is disgusting and tiring in the beginning. He has to cut new grooves in the mind and brain. After some months, he will get interest in concentration. He will enjoy a new kind of happiness, the Concentration-Ananda. He will become restless if he fails to enjoy this new kind of happiness even for one day. Concentration is the only way to get rid of the worldly miseries and tribulations. Your only duty is to practise concentration. You have taken this physical body to practise concentration and through concentration to realise the Self. Charity, Rajasuya Yajna are nothing when compared to concentration. They are playthings only.

Through Vairagya, Pratyahara and practice of concentration, the dissipated rays of wandering mind are slowly collected. Through steady practice it is rendered one-pointed. How happy and strong is that Yogi, who has one-pointed mind! He can turn out voluminous work in the twinkling of an eye.

Those who practise concentration off and on will have only occasionally a steady mind. Sometimes the mind will begin to wander and will be quite unfit for application. You must have a mind that will obey you at all times sincerely and carry out all your commands in the best possible manner at any time. Steady and systematic practice of Raja Yoga will make the mind very obedient and faithful.

There are five Yoga-Bhumikas or stages of the mind viz., Kshipta (distracted), Mudha (dull), Vikshipta (slightly tossing), Ekagra (one-pointed), Niruddha (controlled or well-restrained). By gradual and well-regulated practice of concentration daily, the rays of the wandering mind are collected. It becomes one-pointed. Eventually it is curbed properly. It comes under proper control.

If the aspirant pursues what is not fitting, his progress is painful and sluggish. He who pursues the right path gets easy progress and quick intuition. He who has no past conditions or Spiritual Samskaras of previous birth makes painful progress. One who has spiritual Samskaras makes easy progress. To one whose nature is actually corrupt and whose controlling faculties are weak, progress is painful and intuition is sluggish. But to one of keen controlling faculties, progress is rapid and intuition is quick. In one overcome by ignorance intuition is sluggish; in one not so overcome, intuition is rapid.

5. Exercises in Concentration

I. Ask your friend to show you some playing cards. Immediately after the exposure, describe the forms you have seen. Give the number, name, etc., such as king of clubs, ten of spades, queen of diamonds, jack of hearts, etc.

II. Read two or three pages of a book. Then close the book. Now attend to what you have read. Abandon all distracting thoughts. Focus your attention carefully. Allow the mind to associate, classify, group, combine and compare. You will get now a fund of knowledge and information on the subject. Mere skipping over the pages inadvertently is of no use. There are students who read a book within a few hours. If you ask them to reproduce some important points of the book, they will blink. If you attend to the subject on hand very carefully, you will receive clear, strong impression. If the impressions are strong, you will have very good memory.

III. Sit in your favourite meditative pose about one foot from a watch. Concentrate on the 'tik-tik' sound slowly. Whenever the mind runs, again and again try to hear the sound. Just see how long the mind can be fixed continuously on the sound.

IV. Sit again in your favourite Asana. Close your eyes. Close the ears with your thumbs or plug the ears with wax or cotton. Try to hear the Anahata sounds (mystic sounds). You will hear various kinds of sounds such as flute, violin, kettledrum, thunder-storm, conch, bells, the humming of a bee, etc. Try to hear the gross sounds first. Hear only one kind of sound. If the mind runs, you can shift it from gross to subtle, or from subtle to gross. Generally you will hear sounds in your right ears. Occasionally you may hear in your left ear also. But try to stick to the sound of one ear. You will get one-pointedness of mind. This is an easy way to capture the mind, because it is enchanted by the sweet sound, just as a snake is hypnotised by the notes of the snake-charmer.

V. Keep a candle-flame in front of you and try to concentrate on the flame. When you are tired of doing this, close your eyes and try to visualise the flame. Do it for half a minute and increase the time to five or ten minutes according to your taste, temperament and capacity. You will see Rishis and Devatas, when you enter into deep concentration.

VI. In a lying posture, concentrate on the moon. Whenever the mind runs, again and again bring it back to the image of the moon. This exercise is very beneficial in the case of some persons having an emotional temperament.

VII. In the above manner, you can concentrate on any star you may single out from the millions of stars shining above your head.

VIII. Sit by the side of a river where you can hear a roaring sound like "OM." Concentrate on that sound as long as you like. This is very thrilling and inspiring.

IX. Lie on your bed in the open air and concentrate on the blue expansive sky above. Your mind will expand immediately. You will be elevated. The blue sky will remind you of the infinite nature of the Self.

X. Sit in a comfortable posture and concentrate on any one of the numerous abstract virtues such as mercy, compassion, etc. Dwell upon this virtue as long as you can.

6. Concentration on a Chair

The subject of concentration is disgusting and tiring for the neophyte. But it is the most interesting and beneficial science in the world. When one advances in concentration, when one takes real interest, when one has realised some benefits, he cannot leave the practice. He cannot remain even for a day without concentration. He becomes restless when he fails to have the practice. Concentration brings supreme joy, inner spiritual strength, unalloyed felicity and infinite eternal peace. Concentration brings profound knowledge and deep inner sight, intuition and communion with God. It is a wonderful science in the three worlds. I cannot adequately describe its benefits.

Concentration on a chair really means getting full, detailed knowledge of the chair, its different parts, the particular wood out of which it is manufactured such as Devadaru, rose wood, etc., its workmanship, its durability, its cost price, the degree of comfort it gives for the back, arms, etc., whether the parts can be detached and fixed again, whether it is manufactured on modern lines and made bugproof, what sort of polish or varnish is used to make it durable, etc. When you concentrate on the chair, this sort of idea occupies your mind. Mind generally wanders wildly at random. When it thinks of one object, in a second it leaves that object and runs to another object like a monkey, then to a third object and so on. It cannot stick to one point.

When the thought runs in one definite groove continuously on one subject alone like the flow of oil from one vessel to another, then it is concentration. The aspirant should withdraw his mind whenever it runs outside and put it in the same groove in the same line of thought on one subject and on one idea. This is spiritual Sadhana. This is Dharana and Dhyana. This will result in Samadhi or the superconscious state, the fourth dimension or Turiya.

The vital point in concentration is to bring the mind to the same point of object again by limiting its movements in a small circle in the beginning. That is the main aim. A time will come when the mind will stick to one point alone. This is the fruit of your constant and protracted Sadhana. The joy is indescribable now. When you meditate on a chair, bring all thoughts connected with the chair and dwell on these ideas. Do not allow any other thought connected with another object to enter the mind. There should be one line of thought. There should be one continuity of thought like the steady flow of oil from one vessel to another vessel, like the continuous sound of a church-bell. There may be several ideas connected with one subject. This does not matter. You can reduce the number of ideas and come to one idea of one subject. When this one idea also dies you get the superconscious state or Samadhi. When there is one idea it is called Savikalpa Samadhi which is a lower stage. When this one idea also dies out and when there is not even a single idea, the mind becomes blank or void. There is mental vacuity. This is the stage of thoughtlessness of Patanjali Maharshi in his Raja Yoga philosophy. You will have to rise above this blank Vritti and identify yourself with the Supreme Purusha or Brahman, the silent witness of the mind, who gives power and light to this mind. Then and then alone you can reach the highest goal of life.

When you concentrate on a chair, do not allow any other thought of different objects. Again and again bring the mind that wanders to the object which is chair. When you meditate on a rose, think of rose and rose alone. When you think of a book, think all that is connected with the book and nothing outside it. When you think of a radio or talkie, think of the radio or talkie alone. Exhaust all matters connected with the subject on hand. You can take any subject that is pleasing to the mind. Slowly you can take up any subject that is displeasing to the mind by creating interest in it again and again. You should always remember the maxim: "One thing at a time and that done well is a very good rule as many can tell." When you take up any work, apply your whole heart, full mind and sound to the work. Do it with perfect concentration. What another can do in six hours you can turn out within half an hour, smoothly and in a methodical and orderly manner. This is Yogic activity. You will be taken for an accomplished Yogi. Even when you study, study the subject with perfect concentration. Do not allow the mind to wander. You must shut out all external sounds. Fix the gaze at one point. Do not allow the eyes to wander. When you study one subject, do not think of a talkie or sweetmeats or a friend. The whole world must be dead to you for the time being. Such must be the nature of concentration. It will come to you after some steady and constant endeavours. Be not troubled. Be not discouraged. There will be some delay. Wait coolly and patiently. Rome was not built in a day. It is all a question of time. Do not leave the practice even for a day, even when you are sick. In your failure lies the secret of your success and in your weakness the secret of your strength. Plod on. Push on. Gird up your loins. *Nil desperandum*. Be bold. March on courageously. Be cheerful. A brilliant future is awaiting thee. Practise. Feel. Rejoice. Become a Yogi or a world-figure. I can make you one. Follow me. Be sincere and earnest. Rise up. Awake. Thy Light has come. O my dear children of Light and Immortality, Brahmamuhurta is dawning now. It is 3.30 a.m. This is the best time to practise concentration on Atman, memory and will-culture and to catch hold of the mind. Sit in Virasana and do rigorous practice now. May success and divine glory attend on thee. I shall take leave of you now. I shall leave you there. Melt the bubble mind in Brahman, the ocean of Knowledge, and enjoy Supreme Bliss.

7. Concentration on Anahata Sounds

Dharana is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some interior or exterior object or sound like Anahata sounds, or any abstract idea, accompanied by complete abstraction (Pratyahara) from everything pertaining to the external universe or the world of senses.

PRACTISE SADHANA

Sit in Padma or Siddha Asana. Practise Yoni Mudra by closing the ears with the thumbs. Hear the internal sound through the right ear. The sound which you hear will make you deaf to all external sounds. Having overcome all obstacles, you will enter the Turiya State within 15 days. In the beginning of your practice, you will hear many loud sounds. They gradually increase in pitch and are heard more and more subtly. You should try to distinguish sounds more and more subtle. You may change your concentration from the subtle to the gross, but you should not allow your mind to be diverted from them towards other objects.

The mind having at first concentrated itself on any one sound fixes firmly to that and is absorbed in it. The mind becoming insensible to the external impressions, becomes one with the sound as milk with water and then becomes rapidly absorbed in Chidakasa (the Akasa where Chit prevails). Being indifferent towards all objects, and having controlled the passions, you should, by continual practice, concentrate your attention upon the sound which destroys the mind. Having abandoned all thoughts and being freed from all actions, you should always concentrate your attention on the sound, and then your Chitta becomes absorbed in it. Just as the bee drinking the honey alone does not care for the odour, so the Chitta which is always absorbed in sound, does not long for sensual objects, as it is bound by the sweet smell of Nada and has abandoned its fitting nature. The serpent-Chitta through listening to the Nada is entirely absorbed in it, and becoming unconscious of everything, concentrates itself on the sound. The sound serves the purpose of a sharp goad to control the maddened elephant—Chitta—which roves in the pleasure-garden of the sensual objects.

It serves the purpose of a snare for binding the deer-Chitta. It also serves the purpose of a shore to the ocean-waves of Chitta. The sound proceeding from Pranava, which is Brahman, is of the nature of effulgence; the mind becomes absorbed in it; that is the Supreme Seat of Vishnu. The mind exists so long as there is sound, but with its cessation, there is that state termed Turiya. This sound is absorbed in Brahman and the soundless state is the Supreme Seat. The mind which along with Prana has its Karmic affinities destroyed by the constant concentration upon Nada is absorbed in the unstained One. There is no doubt of it. Being freed from all states and all thoughts whatsoever, you will remain like one dead. You will become a Mukta. There is no doubt about this. The body is certainly like a log and does not feel heat or cold, joy or sorrow. When the spiritual sight becomes fixed without any object to be seen, when the Prana becomes still without any effort, and when the Chitta becomes firm without any support, you become a Brahman (*Brahmavid-Brahmaiva Bhavati*).

You may experience the tenth sound without the first nine sounds through the initiation of a Guru. In the first stage, the body becomes Chin-chini; in the second, there is the (Bhanjana) breaking or affecting in the body; in the third, there is the (Bhedana) piercing; in the fourth, the head shakes; in the fifth, the palate produces saliva; in the sixth, nectar is attained; in the seventh, the knowledge of the hidden things in the world arises; in the eighth, Paravak is heard; in the ninth, the body becomes invisible and the pure divine eye is developed; in the tenth, you attain the state of Para Brahman. When the Manas is destroyed, when virtues and sins are burnt away, you shine as the Effulgent, Immaculate, Eternal, Stainless, Suddha Brahman.

8. Trataka or Gazing

Trataka is steady gazing. Write the word OM in black on the wall. Sit in front of the drawing. Concentrate on it with open eyes till tears come in the eyes. Then close the eyes. Visualise the picture of OM. Then open the eyes and again gaze till lachrymation manifests. Gradually increase the period. There are students who can gaze for one hour. Trataka is one of the Shat-Kriyas (six exercises) in Hatha Yoga. Get an OM picture, fix it on the wall and concentrate on this. Pictures are sold in the bazaar. Trataka steadies the wandering mind and removes Vikshepa (tossing of mind). Instead of gazing on OM you may gaze at a big black dot on the wall. The walls will present a golden colour during Trataka. Or draw a big black dot on a white paper and fix it on the wall. This will be a target for the Yogic student to concentrate his mind upon. Gaze at this black dot on the paper.

You can do Trataka on any picture of the Lord either of Krishna, Rama or Siva or on Saligram. You can sit in the chair and gaze at the picture on the wall in front of your eyes. Trataka is the *alphabet* of concentration. It is the first exercise for Yogic students in concentration.

Trataka with open eyes is followed by visualisation. Visualisation is calling up of a clear mental image of anything. Trataka and visualisation do help a lot in concentration.

The mind can also be rendered steady by doing Manasic Puja, by thinking the attributes of the Lord and by remembering His Lilas.

Practise Trataka for one minute on the first day. Then gradually increase the period every week. Do not strain the eyes. Do it gently with ease and comfort, as long as you can conveniently do. Repeat your Ishta Mantra, Hari Om, Sri Rama or Gayatri during Trataka. In some people who have weak capillaries, the eyes may become red. They need not be alarmed unnecessarily. The redness of the eyes will pass off quickly. Practise Trataka for six months. Then you can take up advanced lessons in concentration and meditation. Be regular and systematic in your Sadhana. If there is a break, take up the deficiency or loss on the next day. Trataka removes many eye-diseases and ultimately brings in Siddhis.

CHAPTER THREE

PRELIMINARIES FOR MEDITATION

1. What Is Meditation?

"Dhyanam nirvishayam manah":—That state of the mind wherein there are no Vishayas or sensual thoughts is meditation.

"Tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam":—A continuous flow of perception or thought is Dhyana (meditation). There is continuous current in the mind of one object like the flow of water in a river (Pravaha). There is only one Vritti in the mind. It is Ekarupa-Vritti-Pravaha.

Meditation is the keeping up of an unceasing flow of God-consciousness. It is the flow of continuous thought of one thing or God or Atman, like the continuous flow of oil (Tailadharavat). All worldly thoughts are shut out from the mind. The mind is filled or saturated with Divine thoughts, Divine glory and Divine presence. Meditation is regular flow of thought with regard to the object of concentration. Meditation follows concentration.

Meditation is the seventh rung or step in the ladder of Yoga. Yogis call this 'Dhyana.' Jnanis term this 'Nididhyasana.' Bhaktas style this 'Bhajana.'

Yama (self-restraint), Niyama (religious observance), Asana (posture), Pranayama (restraint of breath), Pratyahara (abstraction or withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), Samadhi (superconscious state or blissful union with the Supreme Self) are the eight steps of Yoga.

Lord Jesus says, "Empty thyself and I shall fill thee." This corresponds to the teaching of Patanjali Maharshi: *"Yogas-chitta-vritti-nirodhah"*—"Yoga is restraint (annihilation) of all mental modifications (functions)." This emptying process or making the mind blank is no doubt a trying discipline. But continued practice of an intense type will bring success. There is no doubt of this.

2. Necessity for Meditation

Meditation is the only way for attaining Immortality and Eternal Bliss. Those who do not concentrate and meditate are slayers of Atman (Atmahanah)—Isa Upanishad, Mantra 3. They are in fact living corpses and miserable wretches.

The wise cut asunder the knot of egoism by that sharp sword of constant meditation. Then dawns supreme knowledge of the Self or full inner illumination or Self-realisation. The liberated sage has neither doubts not delusions now. All the bonds of Karma are rent asunder. Therefore be ever engaged in meditation. This is the master-key for opening the realms of eternal bliss. It may be tiring and disgusting in the beginning because the mind will be running away from the point every now and then. After some practice it will be focussed in the centre. You will be immersed in the Divine Bliss.

Great Rishis and sages of yore like Yajnavalkya, Uddalaka, etc., acquired the knowledge of the Self which is a means to secure the highest communion through intense meditation.

Just as you require food for the body, so also you require food for the soul in the shape of prayers, Japa, Kirtan, meditation, etc. Just as you are agitated when you do not get food in time, so also you will be agitated if you do not pray in the morning and in the evening when you have kept up the practice of prayer and Japa for some time. The food for the soul is more essential than the food for the body. Therefore do your prayers, Japa and meditation regularly.

Just as you grow jasmine, rose, lily, honolulu and temple-flowers in your garden, so also you should cultivate the flowers of peaceful thoughts, thoughts of love, mercy, kindness, purity, etc., in the vast garden of your Antahkarana. Through introspection you will have to water this garden of mind and with meditation and sublime thinking remove the weeds of vain, useless, discordant thoughts.

When you see the flower on a mango tree, you know pretty well that you will get mangoes quickly. Even so, if you have Santi in your mind, be sure that you will get good meditation and the fruit of Jnana quickly.

Like attracts like. This is a great law. Entertain good thoughts. Do meditation. You will attract Sadhus, Yogis and

Siddhas. You will be benefited by their vibrations. Your new spiritual vibration will attract them.

3. Fruits of Meditation

Even Indra, the Lord of the Devas, who is rolling in abundant wealth, cannot enjoy that bliss which comes to a sage who has a Self-centred mind free from desires, who is resting in his own Svarupa and who has equal vision for all.

Learn the science of self-control. Possess a steady mind by constant practice of meditation. Fix your mind upon God. You will have divine life. Light will shine. There will be inflooding of all divine qualities. All negative tendencies will vanish. All conflicting forces will be reconciled. You will enjoy perfect harmony, undisturbed happiness, abiding peace.

Meditation is the only real, royal road to the attainment of salvation. Meditation kills all pains, sufferings and sorrows. Meditation destroys all causes of sorrow. Meditation gives vision of unity. Meditation induces sense of oneness. Meditation is a balloon or the aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high into the realms of eternal bliss, everlasting peace and undying joy.

Meditation is the royal road to attain Godhead. It is the grand trunk road which takes the aspirant direct to the destination of divine consciousness. It is the mystic ladder which takes the Yogic student from earth to heaven. It is the divine ladder of Yogis which pushes them to the heights of Asamprajnata Samadhi. It is the step in the staircase of Chidakasa to take the aspirant to the highest storey of Advaita Nishtha and Kaivalya Mukti of Vedantins. Without it, no spiritual progress is possible. It is the aerial ropeway that allows the devotee to glide easily to the other shore of Bhava Samadhi and drink the honey of Prema and the nectar of immorality.

Regular meditation opens the avenues of intuition knowledge, makes the mind calm and steady, awakens an ecstatic feeling and brings the Yogic student in contact with the source of the Supreme Purusha. If there are doubts, they are all cleared by themselves when you march on the path of Dhyana Yoga steadily. You will yourself feel the way to place your footsteps on the next rung of the spiritual ladder. A mysterious inner voice will guide you. Hear this attentively, O Yogindra!

If you wind the watch at night, it will run smoothly for twenty-four hours. Even so, if you meditate for one or two hours in the Brahmamuhurta, you can work very peacefully throughout the day. Nothing can disturb your mind. The whole system will be charged with the spiritual vibrations or divine wave.

Many of your doubts will be cleared by themselves during meditation. Some will have to wait for some time for the clearance of some doubts. However much the teacher explains to you, you cannot understand certain things at a certain time. You will have to evolve a little more. When you have evolved, those doubts, which tormented you three years ago will become clear now.

You may have an acute pain, when you get an appendicular colic or when you develop a big abscess. In sleep, you experience no pain at all. When you are under chloroform, there is no pain also. Only when the mind is connected with the body, pain manifests. If you can detach or disconnect the mind from the body, there will be no pain. Atman is a mass of bliss (Anandaghana). If you withdraw the mind from the body and objects and fix it on Atman through constant meditation, all pains will come to an end. Meditation is the only way which can destroy all human miseries. There is no other way.

Real rest can be had during meditation when the mind rests in Atman. Change of work can give rest. Remaining idle without work and allowing the mind to wander about wildly like a rutting furious elephant and building castles in the air cannot bring rest.

The man who cannot fix his mind in meditation cannot have knowledge of the Self. The unsteady man cannot practise any meditation. He cannot have any intense devotion to knowledge of the Self or any burning longing for liberation or Moksha. He who does not practise any meditation cannot possess peace of mind. How can there be happiness for the unpeaceful?

In dream also you will begin to exercise control gradually. You will check the mind when it does an evil act. The force of your Sadhana done in the wakeful state will come to your aid in the dream. This is a sign of your spiritual growth. Watch the dream carefully.

This world is full of miseries and sufferings. If you want to get rid of the pains and afflictions of this Samsara, you must practise meditation. Meditation is the pathway to Divinity. It is the royal road to the kingdom of Brahman. It is a mysterious ladder which reaches from earth to Heaven (Vaikuntha or Kailasa or Brahmaloka), from error to Truth, from darkness to Light, from pain to Bliss, from restlessness to abiding Peace, from ignorance to Knowledge, from mortality to Immortality. Meditation leads to knowledge of the Self which brings about Eternal Peace and Supreme Bliss. Meditation prepares you for the integral experiences or direct intuitive knowledge.

Truth is Brahman. Truth is Atman. Truth is quite pure and simple. You cannot realise the Truth without reflection and meditation. Be silent. Know thyself. Know That. Melt the mind in That.

Without the help of meditation you cannot attain knowledge of the Self. Without its aid you cannot grow into the Divine state. Without it you cannot liberate yourself from the trammels of the mind and attain Immortality. If you do not practise meditation, the supreme splendour and fadeless glories of Atman will remain hidden from you. Tear the veils that cover the soul by practising regular meditation. Rend asunder the five sheaths that screen the Atman by constant meditation and then attain the final beatitude of life.

The fire of meditation annihilates all foulness due to vice. Then suddenly comes Knowledge or Divine Wisdom which directly leads to Mukti or final emancipation.

There are many valuable types of training of the mind, which are essential to mental culture, for instance, the training of memory, cultivation of reflection, discrimination, Vichara or enquiry of 'Who am I.' The practice of meditation itself is a potent clarifier of the memory. The practice of memory-culture powerfully helps the attainment of meditation.

Meditation is a powerful tonic. It is a mental and nervine tonic as well. The holy vibrations penetrate all the cells of the body and cure the diseases of the body. Those who meditate save doctor's bills. The powerful, soothing waves that arise during meditation exercise a benign influence on the mind, nerves, organs and cells of the body. The Divine energy freely flows like a Taila-Dhara (flow of oil from one vessel to another) from the feet of the Lord to the different systems of the Sadhaka (aspirant).

If you can meditate for half an hour you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual strength in the battle of life for one week through the force of this meditation. Such is the beneficial result of meditation. As you have to move with different minds of peculiar nature in your daily life, get the strength and peace from meditation and you will have no trouble and worry then.

A Yogi who meditates regularly has a magnetic and charming personality. Those who come in contact with him are much influenced by his sweet voice, powerful speech, lustrous eyes, brilliant complexion, strong, healthy body, good behaviour, virtuous quality and Divine nature. Just as a grain of salt dropped in a basin of water dissolves and becomes distributed throughout the whole water, just as the sweet fragrance of jasmine pervades the air, so also, his spiritual aura becomes infiltrated into the minds of others. People draw joy, peace and strength from him. They are inspired by his speech and get elevation of mind by mere contact with him.

Meditation opens the door of the mind to intuitive knowledge and many powers.

Meditate. Meditate. Do not lose even a single minute. Meditation will remove all the miseries of life. That is the only way. Meditation is the enemy of the mind. It brings about Mano-Nasha or the death of the mind.

The Mahatma who meditates in a solitary cave in the Himalayas helps the world more through his spiritual vibrations than the Sadhu who preaches at the platform. Just as sound-vibrations travel in the ethereal space, so also the spiritual vibrations of a meditator travel a long distance and bring peace and strength to thousands.

When the meditator becomes mindless, he pervades and permeates the whole world. Ignorant people bring a false charge that the Sadhus who meditate in caves are selfish.

Build through regular meditation a strong spiritual fortress and magnetic aura around you, which cannot be penetrated even by the messengers of Maya or Satan.

Concentration of the mind on God after purification can give you real happiness and knowledge. You are carried away to external objects through Raga and Moha. Concentrate upon God in the heart. Dive deep. Merge within.

During meditation, when your mind is more Sattvic, you will be inspired. The mind will be composing fine poems and solving intricate problems of life. Stamp out these Sattvic Vrittis also. This is all dissipation of mental energy. Soar higher and higher in Atman only.

You will get the full Ananda of the Divine glory only when you dive deep, when you merge deep into silent meditation. When you are on the borderland of divinity of God, when you are at the gate or threshold of God, when you are on the outer skirts, you will not get the maximum peace and bliss.

During meditation some of the visions that you see are your own materialised thoughts, while some others are real objective visions.

Real Peace and Ananda manifest only when the Vasanas are thinned out and Sankalpas extinguished. When you fix the mind either on Sri Krishna, Siva or Atman even for five minutes, Sattva Guna is infused into the mind. Vasanas are thinned out. You feel peace and bliss during the five minutes. You can, with the subtle Buddhi, compare this Ananda from meditation with the transitory sensual pleasures. You will find that this Ananda from meditation is million times superior to sensual pleasures. Meditate and feel this Ananda. Then you will know the real value.

If an aspirant in Kashmir meditates upon his Guru or spiritual guide at Uttarkasi, Himalayas, a definite connection is established between him and the teacher. The Guru radiates power, peace, joy and bliss to the student in response to his thoughts. He is bathed in the powerful current of magnetism. The stream of spiritual electricity flows steadily from the preceptor to his disciple, just as oil flows from one vessel to another. The student can imbibe or draw from his teacher in proportion to his degree of faith. Whenever the student sincerely meditates upon his teacher, the teacher also actually feels that a current of prayer or sublime thoughts proceeds from his student and touches his heart. He who has the inner astral sight can clearly visualise a thin line of bright light between the disciple and the teacher, which is caused by the movement of the vibrations of Sattvic thoughts, in the ocean of Chitta.

A sudden stroke of mystic illumination puts an end of all the empirical existence altogether and the very idea or remembrance of such a thing as this world or the narrow individuality of the spirit in this world absolutely leaves.

When the Yogi has reached the last stage of meditation and Samadhi, all the residues of his actions are burnt completely. He gets liberation in this very life. Then he is a Jivanmukta.

Meditation gives a lot of spiritual strength, peace, new vigour and vitality. It is the best mental tonic. If a meditator gets irritated very often, it shows he is not doing good uninterrupted meditation. There is something wrong in his Sadhana.

Meditation develops strong and pure thoughts. Mental images are clear-cut and well-defined. Good thoughts are well-grounded. Through clarification of ideas, confusion vanishes.

Just as sweet perfume continuously emanates from an incense stick, so also the sweet perfume and divine effulgence (Brahmavarchasa, magnetic Brahmic aura or Tejas) emanate continuously from the face of an aspirant who does regular constant meditation. Those who do meditation will have a calm, serene, charming face, sweet voice and lustrous bright eyes.

Just as cultivation in a barren land or saltish earth becomes absolutely fruitless, so also meditation done without Vairagya becomes fruitless.

If you can meditate for half an hour, you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual energy in the daily battle of life for one week through the power and vigour of meditation. The fire of meditation annihilates all foulness due to vice. Then suddenly comes knowledge or divine wisdom which directly leads to Mukti or final emancipation.

In contemplation you are in spiritual contact with the unchanging Light. You are cleansed of all the impurities. This Light cleanses the soul which touches it. The sun-glass is exposed to the light of the sun and the straws underneath catch fire. So within yourself, if you have an open heart devoutly lifted up to God, the Light of His purity and love, illuminating this open soul, will consume all your shortcomings in the fire of Divine love. The Light brings enhanced energy and great comfort.

All the visible things are Maya. Maya will vanish through Jnana or meditation on Atman. One should exert himself to get rid of Maya. Maya havocs through the mind. Destruction of the mind means the annihilation of the Maya. Nididhyasana (meditation on Atman) is the way for conquering Maya. Lord Buddha, Raja Bhartrihari, Dattatreya, Akhow of Gujarat, all had conquered Maya and mind through deep meditation only. Enter the silence. Meditate. Meditate.

Those who practise meditation will find that they are more sensitive than the people who do not meditate, and because of that the strain on the physical body is enormous. Sometimes even the advanced aspirants begin to think: "How will be the state of God-realisation? How will God appear to me? How will He look to my vision?" God-realisation is beyond description. There are no means to describe it. There is perfect peace. There is ineffable bliss. There is profound silence. Spiritual knowledge dawns. The mind, the intellect and the senses cease functioning. There is intuitional experience. This much only can be said. You will have to experience this yourself in Samadhi or superconscious state.

The mind-wandering will gradually cease through regular meditation. Meditation will remove irritability and will also augment the peace of mind considerably.

4. Brahmamuhurta—Best Time for Meditation

O Aspirants! Get up at Brahmamuhurta and practise meditation. Do not fail at any cost. Brahmamuhurta is the morning period from 3.30 a.m. to 5.30 a.m. It is very favourable for meditation. The mind is quite refreshed after good sleep. It is quite calm and serene. There is the preponderance of Sattva or purity in the mind at this time. In the atmosphere also, Sattva predominates at this period.

The mind is like a blank sheet of paper or a clean tablet and comparatively free from worldly Samskaras or impressions at this period. Raga-Dvesha currents have not yet deeply entered the mind. The mind can be moulded very easily at this period in any way you like. You can charge the mind now easily with divine thoughts.

Further, all the Yogis, Paramahamsas, Sannyasins, aspirants and the Rishis of the Himalayas start their meditation at this period and send their vibrations throughout the world. You will be immensely benefited by their spiritual currents. Meditation will come by itself without any effort. It is a terrible spiritual loss for you if you do not utilise the period in divine contemplation and if you snore at this time. Do not become a Kumbhakarna. Become a Yogi like Jnana Deva.

In the winter it is not necessary that you should take a cold bath. A mental bath will suffice. Imagine and feel, "I am taking a bath now in the sacred Triveni at Prayaga or Manikarnika at Benares." Remember the pure Atman. Repeat the formula, "I am ever pure Soul." This is the most powerful wisdom-bath in Jnana-Ganga. This is highly purifying. It burns all sins. Answer the calls of nature quickly. Cleanse the teeth quickly. Do not waste much time in cleansing the teeth and taking bath. Be quick. Hurry up. Get ready soon. The Brahmamuhurta will pass away quickly. You must utilise this precious time in Japa and meditation.

Wash the face, hands and feet quickly. Dash cold water on the face and top of the head. This will cool the brain and the eyes. Sit in Siddha, Padma or Sukha Asana. Try to climb the supreme height of Brahman, the peak of divine glory and splendour.

If you are not in the habit of getting up early, have an alarm timepiece. Once the habit is established, there will be no difficulty. The subconscious mind will become your willing and obedient servant to wake you up at the particular time.

If you are a subject of chronic constipation, you can drink a tumbler of cold water or lukewarm water as soon as you get up after cleansing the teeth. This is Usha-Pana treatment in the science of Hatha Yoga. This will give you a good motion. You can drink Triphala water also. Soak two Harad (Myrobalan), two Amalaka and two Thannikkai in a tumblerful of cold water at night. Drink the water in the morning after cleansing the teeth. You can keep a ready powder of these three drugs and put one or two teaspoonfuls in the water.

Cultivate the habit answering the calls of nature as soon as you get up from bed. If you suffer from incurable, old constipation, due to old sins, do meditation as soon as you get up.

You can answer the calls of nature after finishing your morning meditation with the help of a cup of hot milk.

As soon as you get up from bed, do Japa and meditation. This is important. After finishing your Japa and meditation, you can take to the practice of Asana, Pranayama and study of the Gita and other religious books.

Every Sandhya time, or dusk, is also favourable for meditation. During Brahmamuhurta and dusk, Sushumna Nadi flows readily. You will enter into deep meditation and Samadhi without much effort when Sushumna-Nadi flows. That is the reason why Rishis, Yogis and scriptures speak very highly of these two periods of time. When the breath flows through both nostrils, know that the Sushumna is working. Whenever the Sushumna functions, sit for meditation and enjoy the inner peace of Atman or Soul.

Repeat some Divine Stotras or hymns or Guru Stotras or chant OM twelve times, or do Kirtan for five minutes before you start your Japa and meditation. This will quickly elevate your mind and drive off laziness and sleepiness. Do Sirshasana or Sarvangasana or any Asana for five minutes. Do Pranayama for five minutes. This also will make you quite fit for the practice of meditation and removes laziness and sleepy condition.

O Man! It is Brahmamuhurta now! Do not snore. Do not roll in the bed. Throw away the blanket. Get up, start your meditation vigorously, and enjoy the eternal bliss of the Inner Self.

5. Meditation Room

Have a separate meditation room under lock and key. This is a *sine qua non*. Convert a room into a forest. Do not allow anybody to enter the room. Keep it holy. If you cannot afford to have a separate room, convert a small corner of the room as the meditation room with screens or curtains. Burn incense or scented sticks and camphor in the morning and evening. Keep a photo of Lord Krishna, Siva, Rama, Devi, Gayatri, Guru, Lord Jesus or Lord Buddha. Place your seat in front of the picture. Keep some books such as the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, the Upanishads, the Vivekachudamani, the Yoga-vasishtha, the Brahma-Sutras, the Bible, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, etc., in the room.

Decorate the room with inspiring pictures of great saints, sages, prophets and world-teachers. Take a bath before you enter the room. Or wash your face, hands and legs before you enter the room. Sit on the Asana in front of the deity. Sing devotional hymns or repeat Guru Stotras. Then take to the practice of Japa, concentration and meditation.

The room should be regarded as a temple of God. You should enter the room with a pious and reverent mind. Thoughts of jealousy, lust, greed and anger should not be entertained within the four walls of the room. No worldly talks should be indulged in there. For every word that is uttered, every thought that is cherished and every deed that is done is not lost. They are reflected on the subtle layers of ether encircling the room where they are done and hence affect the mind invariably.

When you repeat the Mantra or the name of the Lord, the powerful vibrations are lodged in the ether of the room. In six months' time you will feel peace and purity in the atmosphere of the room. Whenever your mind is much disturbed by worldly influence, sit in the room and repeat the name of the Lord for half an hour. Then you will find entire change in the mind immediately. Practise and feel the soothing, spiritual influences yourself. You will find a local Mussoorie, Darjeeling, Simla, Ooty in your own house. You need not go to a hill-station for change. Nothing is like Spiritual Sadhana or Yoga practice.

6. Places for Meditation

> "One should perform his Yogic meditation in concentration on a level place, free from pebbles, fire, wind, dust, dampness and disturbing noises, where the scenery is charming and pleasing to the eyes and where there are bowers, caves, good waterplaces which help the practice of concentration." —*Svetasvataropanishad*: 11-10.

The world will not suit you for meditation when you advance in the spiritual path. There are many disturbing causes. The environments are not elevating. Your friends are your worst enemies. They take away all your time through vain talks. It is inevitable. You are puzzled. You are worried. Then you try to get out of the environments. To save time, money, wanderings, I shall mention some good places for meditation. You can select one of these places. The place must have a temperate, even climate, and must suit you during summer, rainy season and winter. You must stick to one place for three years with firm determination. As all places combine some advantages and disadvantages, you will have to select that place which has more advantages and less disadvantages. Everything is relative in this world. Even if you wander from pole to pole, you can hardly get an ideal place that can satisfy you from all viewpoints. You will have to create your own spiritual atmosphere through Japa, meditation and prayer. To get an ideal place is an impossibility. You must not shift when you get some inconvenience. You must put up with it. There is no benefit in frequent wanderings. Do not compare one place with another. Maya tempts you in various ways. Use your Viveka and reason. Mussoorie will appear to you most charming when you are at Simla. Simla will appear more delightful when you are at Mussoorie. Do not believe the mind and senses any more. Enough; enough of their tricks. Be on the watch to guard you off from sense-deceptions and temptations.

First, I suggest Rishikesh and Munikireti. They are wonderful places for meditation. They are admirably adapted. The charm and spiritual influence are simply marvellous. You can put up your cottage here. Uttarakasi, Brahmapuri, Garudachatti, Nilakanth (near Rishikesh), are other nice places. Almora, Nainital, are also good. Any village on the banks of the Ganga, Narmada, Yamuna, is beautiful. Kulu Valley and Champa Valley are quite suitable. If you want a cave-life, go in for Vasishtha Guha, fourteen miles from Rishikesh. It is a beautiful cave, where Swami Rama Tirtha lived for some time. Milk is available from neighbouring villages. Rama Guha in Brahmapuri near Rishikesh is another good charming place. You can get dry rations for fifteen days from Kali Kamliwala's Kshetra. Bamrughi Guha, near Tehri, Himalayas, is a good cave. You will find many villages near Tehri for contemplation. Muralidhar has built up fine, pukka Kutia with a fine garden. You also can have this. Mount Abu is a beautiful cool place.

Cool places are needed for meditation. The brain gets tired very soon in a hot place. In a cool place, you can meditate all the twenty-four hours. You will not feel exhaustion. Maharajahs of Alwar and Limbdi have built nice caves in Mount Abu and arranged food and other conveniences for good, educated Sadhus only. Lakshmanjhula is another good place. There is ample space for erection of new cottages. Brahma-Varta, near Kanpur, is a suitable place. There are many good places seven miles beyond Mathura on the banks of the Yamuna. Uttarakasi has beautiful, spiritual vibratory condition. You can stay in a solitary place called Laksheshvar.

IMPORTANT PLACES FOR MEDITATION

1. Rishikesh (Himalayas)
2. Haridwar
3. Uttarkasi (via Tehri)
4. Kankhal (near Haridwar)
5. Badri Narayan (Himalayas)
6. Devaprayag (Himalayas)
7. Gangotri (Himalayas)
8. Ayodhya
9. Mount Abu
10. Nasik
11. Varanasi
12. Brindavan (Mathura)
13. Srinagar (Kashmir)
14. Almora
15. Nainital
16. Bangalore
17. Puri
18. Dwaraka
19. Pandharpur

20 Tiruvottiyur

21. Alandi, near Poona
22. Tiruvengoi Hills, Musiri, S. India
23. Tirupathi Hills
24. Papanasam (Tirunelveli Dt.)

(Select some secluded spots in these places.)

Any place or village on the banks of the Ganga, Yamuna, Cauveri, Godavari, Krishna, Tamraparni, will suit you for meditation. You can select any place which has an even climate.

Of all the places, Rishikesh is the best place in the world. The spiritual vibrations are soul-elevating. The scenery is highly charming. It is a beauty-spot.

Mussoorie, Darjeeling, Simla, Ooty, Kodaikanal, and all hill-stations are cool places. They have a beautiful scenery also. But they are Rajasic centres. They have no elevating spiritual vibrations. People go there for enjoyment and taint the atmosphere. Hence they are not suitable for meditation.

You must have some conveniences also such as library, medical aid, a railway station, in the beginning. You must be able to get some fruits and milk. Otherwise it is difficult to continue your Sadhana in one place for a long time. When you are advanced in Sadhana, when you go above body-consciousness, you can remain in any place.

Solitude and intense meditation are two important requisites for Self-realisation. The banks of the Ganga or Narmada, Himalayan scenery, lovely flower gardens, sacred temples—these are the place which elevate the mind in concentration and meditation. Have recourse to them.

A solitary place, spiritual vibratory conditions as at Uttarakasi, Rishikesh, Badri Narayan, a good place and temperate climate—these conditions are indispensably requisite for concentration of mind.

7. Cave-Life for Meditation

Cave-life is extremely good. The ancient Rishis and seers of India lived in the caves of Himalayas and did rigorous Tapascharya. The temperature is quite even in caves. Caves are very cooling. The heat of scorching summer cannot penetrate inside the cave. It is quite warm in winter. All external sounds are shut out in a cave. You can have very beautiful, uninterrupted meditation. There is solitude in caves. The spiritual currents are elevating. There is no mundane atmosphere there, because modern civilisation has not penetrated there. Such are the advantages of cave-life.

There is the beautiful Vasishtha Guha in the Himalayas, which is fourteen miles away from Rishikesh. Maharshi Vasishtha did Tapas here. Hence the name "Vasishthaguha." Guha means a cave. You can get milk from the neighbouring villages. Bamrugha Guha, near Tehri, Himalayas, is another good cave. There are caves near Nilakanth hills six miles from Rishikesh.

Cave-like is not suitable for aspirants who have modern education and delicate constitution, and who are timid. It is meant for aspirants who have a strong sturdy frame, who are fearless and who have intense power of endurance. Those who have some Divya Siddhis can live there. Those who have a good knowledge of Butis or Himalayan herbs, who have strengthened the body by means of special Kayakalpa, who have a body which is proof against bites of poisonous insects or creatures by taking a course of Nimi Kalpa or purified nux vomica, those who have Mantra-Siddhi, who have control over wild animals, who can bear heat and cold, hunger and thirst, those who have lost all attractions for the world, sense-objects, work of any kind, who can meditate for a long time, who have internal dispassion, can remain in a cave.

Some young raw aspirants with weak body and indifferent health, in whom a ray of Viveka and dispassion has recently dawned through study of some religious books, through some mishap or some difficulties in life, run to the Himalayan caves without any previous preparation or bodily and mental discipline. Just as the mercury in the thermometer runs to 106 degrees in high fevers, so also juvenile bubbling emotion runs to 112 degrees to the crown of the head. It cools down quickly. They find it difficult to pull on there and leave the place in a few days. For some, cave-life is not suitable. They develop some sort of skin-diseases and pale-bloodedness owing to lack of ventilation.

Artificial caves like Kaivalya-Guha, Ananda Kutir, with good ventilation can be built underneath the ground in any solitary place, even in your own compound or village. Two walls with a hollow in the middle and pipes to bring in cool air and take away hot air, will keep the cave quite cool. All real aspirants who remain in the world should build one for their meditation. They will be immensely benefited.

There is another disadvantage in cave-life. He who lives in the cave for a long time becomes Tamasic. He is unable to do any kind of work. He cannot mix with people. He is terribly afraid of multitude of people. His mind gets distracted soon if he is in the company of a few persons, if he hears a little noise. This is not balanced life. This is one-sided development. He who dwells in the cave must be able to keep his balance, even when he comes to a busy town. This is the sign of his spiritual growth.

The real snug, well-furnished, marvellous, awe-inspiring cave is in your heart. It is the Hridaya-Guha of the Upanishads, wherein Dattatreya, Sankara, and Yajnavalkya dwelt in days of yore. Even now, modern Rishis and sages abide there, withdrawing the outgoing senses and mind. They drink the nectar of Immortality there, and remain ever-blissful.

May you all dwell in this mysterious, magnificent cave in the heart alone in communion with your Inner Self, the secondless Brahman or the Absolute, the Goal, the Sole Refuge of all!!!

8. Preparation for Meditation

Keep the head, neck and back in one straight line. Read the 11th and 13th Slokas of chapter VI of the Gita, wherein a description of the Asana is given. Spread a four-folded blanket and over this spread a piece of soft, white cloth. This will do nicely. If you can get a good tiger-skin or deer-skin, it is all the more better. A tiger-skin has got its own advantages. It generates electricity in the body quickly and does not allow leakage of electric current from the body. It is full of magnetism.

Face East or North. A spiritual neophyte should observe this rule. In facing North he is in communion with the Rishis of the Himalayas and he is mysteriously benefited by their currents.

9. How to Meditate

Habitual meditation and habitual silence are great assets for you in the spiritual path. Meditation gives a lot of spiritual strength, peace, new vigour and vitality. If a meditator gets irritated very often, it shows he is not having good, uninterrupted meditation. There is something wrong with his Sadhana and contemplation.

You will have to meditate with a calm mind. Then only you will enter into Samadhi quickly. If you control the Indriyas and if you become desireless you will have a calm mind. Keen longing for liberation and thoughts of God will destroy all desires. He who has a calm mind, is an Emperor or emperors, the Shah of Shahs. The state of one who has a calm mind is indescribable.

In meditation and concentration you will have to train the mind in a variety of ways. Then only the gross mind will become subtle (Sukshma).

Whatever you meditate on in silence should be manifested in daily life. You should keep up poise and harmony in action. You will be ever peaceful. Then only you will enjoy the real fruit of meditation.

PROCESS OF MEDITATION

Keeping the upper parts (the chest, neck and the head) erect and equal to the (other parts of the) body, subduing within the heart the senses together with the mind, let the wise by the raft of Brahman (OM) cross over all the fearful torrents of the world.

Keeping down the senses (Pranas), subduing his desires, and gently respiring through the nostrils, let the wise diligently attend to the mind, as the charioteer to a car, drawn by vicious horses.

When in the Yogi's body, composed of earth, water, light, air and ether, the fivefold qualities which mark concentration as described below are manifest, then there is no disease or age or pain for him, who has obtained the body burning with the fire of concentration.

When the body is light and without diseases, the mind without desire, when the colour is shining, the voice sweet and the smell pleasant, when the excrements are few, they say, the first degree of concentration is gained.

GENERAL HINTS

Just as you saturate the salt or sugar with the water you will have to saturate the mind with thoughts of God, with divine Glory, divine Presence, with sublime soul-awakening spiritual thoughts. Then only you will be established in the divine Consciousness always.

Five things are indispensable if you want to practise vigorous meditation and attain Samadhi or Self-realisation quickly. They are Mouna, light diet or a diet of milk and fruits, solitude with charming scenery, personal contact with a teacher and a cool place.

You will enter into deep meditation only if you lead a moral life. You may try further to build up discrimination and the other steps in your mind. You can cultivate the mind in concentration and can finally devote yourself to meditation. The more you lead the moral life, the more you meditate, the greater likelihood will then be for you to enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi which can liberate you from the round of births and deaths and can confer on you Eternal Bliss and Immortality.

What does Lord Krishna teach by holding the flute in His hands? What is the symbolic philosophy of the flute? Flute is the symbol of Om. He says, "Empty your egoism. I will play on your body-flute. Let your will become one with My will. Take refuge in OM. You will enter into My being. Hear the inner soul-stirring music of the soul and rest in everlasting peace!"

Samadhi is possible by the practice of concentration and meditation with light diet. Meditate for 2 or 3 hours. If you get tired, take rest for half an hour. Take a cup of milk and then again sit for meditation. Repeat the process of meditation again and again. You can have a stroll in the verandah in the evening. Do not allow the mind to entertain any worldly thought even for a few minutes.

Just as the student creates interest in his study of mathematics or geometry, although it is disgusting in the beginning, by imagining the advantages that he will gain by passing the examination, so also you will have to create interest in meditation by thinking on the incalculable benefits that will be derived by its constant practice, viz., Immortality, Supreme Peace and Infinite Bliss.

When you have disinclination for work and a desire for meditation only, you can lead a life of complete seclusion, living on milk and fruits alone. You will have good spiritual progress. When there is inclination for work, when the meditative mood vanishes, take up work again. Thus by gradual practice the mind should be moulded.

Put a piece of iron in the blazing furnace. It becomes red like fire. Remove it. It loses its red colour. If you want to keep it always red, you must always keep it in fire. So also if you want to keep the mind charged with the fire of Brahmic Wisdom, you must keep it always in contact or touch with Brahmic fire of knowledge through constant and intense meditation. You must keep up an unceasing flow of the Brahmic consciousness. Then you will have the Sahaja Avastha (Natural State).

If you can meditate for half an hour, you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual strength in the battle of life for one week through the force of this meditation. As you have to move with different minds of peculiar nature in your daily life, get the strength and peace from meditation. Then you will have no trouble and worry.

When you are a neophyte in meditation, start repeating some sublime Slokas or Stotras (hymns) for ten minutes as soon as you sit for meditation. This will elevate the mind. The mind can be easily withdrawn from the worldly objects. Then stop this kind of thinking also and fix the mind on one idea only by repeated and strenuous effort. Then Nishtha will ensue.

IMAGES

You must have a mental image of God or Brahman (concrete or abstract) before you begin to meditate. When you see the concrete figure of Lord Krishna with open eyes and meditate, it is the concrete form of meditation. When you reflect over the image of Lord Krishna by closing your eyes, it is also concrete form of meditation but it is more abstract. When you meditate on the infinite abstract light it is still more abstract meditation. The former two types belong to Saguna form of meditation, the latter to Nirguna form. Even in Nirguna meditation there is an abstract form in the beginning for fixing the mind. Later on this form vanishes and the meditation and the meditated become one. Meditation proceeds from the mind.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

During meditation, note how long you can shut out all worldly thoughts. Watch the mind very carefully. If it is for twenty minutes try to increase the period to thirty or forty minutes and so on. Fill the mind with thoughts of God again and again.

When the mind becomes steady in meditation, the eye-balls also become steady. A Yogi whose mind is calm will have a steady eye. There will be no winking at all. The eyes will be red or pure white.

All actions whether internal or external can be done only when the mind is united with the organs. Thought is the real action. If you have control over the mind by steady practice, if you can regulate your emotions and moods, you will not do foolish and wrong actions. Meditation will help a lot in checking various emotions and impulses.

Concentrate and meditate on the expansive sky. This is also another kind of Nirguna meditation. By this method of meditation, the mind will stop thinking of finite forms. It will slowly begin to melt in the ocean of peace, as it is deprived of its contents, viz., the forms of various sorts. It will become subtler and subtler.

Some students like to concentrate with open eyes, while some with closed eyes, while some others with half open eyes. If you meditate with closed eyes, dust or foreign particles will not fill in your eyes. Some students prefer concentration with open eyes. Some who meditate with closed eyes are overpowered by sleep within a short time. If the eyes are open the mind wanders to objects in the beginners. Use your common-sense and adopt that which suits you best. Overcome other obstacles, day by day, under any circumstance.

You must be regular in your practice of meditation. Regularity in meditation is a great desideratum. Rapid progress and great success can be attained if regularity is observed by the practitioner. Even if you do not realise any tangible result in the practice, you must plod on in the practice with sincerity, earnestness, patience and perseverance. You will get success after some time. There is no doubt of this. Do not stop the practice even for a day, under any circumstance.

Fill the mind again and again with Sattvic and Divine thoughts. New grooves and avenues will be formed now. Just as a gramophone needle cuts a small groove in the plate, so also Sattvic thinking will cut new healthy grooves in the mind and brain. New Samskaras will be formed.

Prana is the overcoat for the mind. The vibration of the subtle psychic Prana gives rise to the formation of thought. By Pranayama you can improve your meditation by making the mind more steady.

If you keep lemon-juice or tamarind-juice in a golden cup, it is not spoiled or tainted. If you keep it in a brass or copper vessel, it is at once spoiled and rendered poisonous. Even so, if there are some Vishaya-Vrittis (sensual thoughts) in the pure mind of a person who practises constant meditation, they will not pollute the man and induce Vikara (passionate excitement). If there are sensual thoughts in persons with impure minds, they cause excitement in them when they come across sensual objects.

BODILY HEALTH

Asana (posture) steadies the body. Bandhas and Mudras make the body firm. Pranayama makes the body light. Nadi-Suddhi effects Samyavastha of the mind. Having acquired these qualifications you will have to fix the mind on Brahman. Then only meditation will go on steadily with happiness.

At 4 a.m. do Sirshasana for 5 minutes. Then take rest for five minutes. Then sit and meditate. You will have wonderful meditation.

Before doing meditation, do 20 mild Kumbhakas. Then sit for meditation. Pranayama drives away Tandri and Alasya (drowsiness and laziness) and makes the mind steady.

Live on milk and fruits only, for a week. You will have nice meditation. This diet makes you light and Sattvic. At night make it a point to take half a seer of milk only. You will have good meditation. You can overcome sleep quite easily. Heavy food at night brings on drowsiness quickly.

MEDITATIVE POSTURE

Those who meditate for four or five hours at one stretch can have Asanas either Padma and Vajra or Siddha and Vajra in the beginning. Sometimes the blood accumulates in the part of the legs or thighs and gives a little trouble. After two hours, change the Asana from Padma or Siddha Asana to Vajrasana or stretch the legs at full length. Lean against a wall or a pillow. Keep the spine erect. This is the most comfortable Asana. Join two chairs. Sit in one chair and stretch the legs on another chair. This is another contrivance.

This is one kind of meditation for beginners. Sit in Padmasana in a solitary room. Close your eyes. Meditate on the effulgence in the sun, splendour in the moon, glory in the stars, beauty in the sky!

PRELIMINARY REQUISITES

Train the mind in a variety of ways in concentration in the beginning. Concentrate on the Anahata sounds of the heart by closing the ears. Concentrate on the breath with Soham repetition. Concentrate on any concrete image. Concentrate on the blue sky. Concentrate on the all-pervading light of the sun.

Concentrate on the various Chakras of the body. Concentrate on the abstract ideas of Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Ekam, Nityam, etc. (Truth, Wisdom, Infinity, One Eternal Essence). Lastly stick to one thing only.

In meditation do not strain the eyes. Do not strain the brain. Do not struggle or wrestle with the mind. Relax. Gently allow the divine thoughts to flow. Steadily think of the Lakshya (point of meditation). Do not voluntarily and violently drive away intruding thoughts. Have sublime Sattvic thoughts.

If there is much strain in meditation reduce the number of hours for a few days. Do light meditation only. When you have regained the normal tone, again increase the period. Use your common-sense throughout the Sadhana. I always reiterate this point.

10. When and Where to Meditate

Practise meditation in Brahmamuhurta. This is the best period for meditation. Always choose that part of the day or night when your mind is clear and when you are least likely to be disturbed. You can have a sitting just before retiring to bed. The mind will be calm at this time. You can have good meditation on Sundays, because it is a holiday and the mind is free. Do vigorous meditation on Sundays. You can have very good concentration when you live on milk and fruits alone, or when you fast. Use your common-sense always and try to bring good outturn in meditation.

Meditate at night. A second sitting is necessary. If you have not got sufficient leisure you can meditate even for a few minutes, say 10 or 15 minutes at night. You will have no bad dreams at night. The divine thoughts will be carried during sleep also. The good impressions will be there.

An aspirant who meditates in a solitary upstair room in a town will have as much quiet there as in a forest. But he will not have the congenial spiritual vibrations there as in Rishikesh, Uttarakasi or Gangotri. Vibrations play a vital part in the elevation of mind and in producing Ekagrata of mind. In these holy places the vibrations of Rishis are lodged in the ethereal space and the aspirants are highly benefited by these vibrations. Vairagya, Sattvic Bhava and the meditative mood come by themselves without effort or struggle in these holy places.

Some ladies got down from the train at the Rishikesh station. The moment they saw the Himalayas they uttered: "Who is son? Who is father? Everything is Maya. Everything is false!" Such is the powerful influence of vibrations on the mind. It is only sages and Yogis who can know at once the nature of vibrations of a place for meditation.

You have been given a key to unlock many of the secrets of life. That key is meditation. Meditate regularly in the morning between 4 and 7 a.m. and attain eternal bliss and immortality.

The banks of the Ganga or Narmada, Himalayan sceneries, lovely flower-gardens and sacred temples are the places which elevate the mind in concentration and meditation. Have recourse to them.

A solitary place where the climate is cool with spiritual vibratory conditions is best suited for concentration of mind.

You will have a clear and calm mind in the early morning hours. There is a spiritual influence and mysterious silence then. All saints and Yogis practise meditation at this period and send their spiritual vibrations to the whole world. You will be highly benefited by their vibrations if you start your prayer, Japa and meditation at this period. You need not exert. The meditative state of mind will come of itself.

11. Requisites for Meditation

When the mind becomes Nirvishaya (free from thinking of sense-objects and their enjoyments) it is meditation.

God has hidden Himself in this world (immanent) and is seated in the cavity of the lotus of your heart. He is an absentee landlord. You will have to seek Him through concentration and meditation with a pure mind. This is the real play of hide and seek.

For purposes of meditation everything is to be rendered Sattvic. The place of meditation must be Sattvic. The food must be Sattvic. The wearing apparel must be Sattvic. The company must be Sattvic. Talking must be Sattvic. The sound that you hear must be Sattvic. Thinking must be Sattvic. Study must be Sattvic. Everything must be Sattvic. Then only good progress in Sadhana is possible, particularly in the case of beginners (neophytes).

REQUISITES

(a) A cool Sattvic place like Uttarakasi, Rishikesh, Lakshmanjhula, Kankhal or Badrinath is necessary for meditation, because the brain gets hot during meditation.

(b) There must be capacity for Sadhana.

(c) There must be good, Sattvic, substantial, light and nutritious food.

(d) There must be a good spiritual teacher (Anubhava Guru) to guide you.

(e) There must be good books for study.

(f) There must be burning Vairagya, burning Mumukshutva and strong Viveka in you.

(g) You must have a sharp, subtle, calm and one-pointed Buddhi to understand the Brahma-Tattva or Brahma Vastu. Then and then only Realisation is possible. Many do not get the above favourable conditions for spiritual Sadhana. This is the reason why they do not make any spiritual progress.

Meditation is possible when the mind is full of Sattva Guna. The stomach should not be loaded. There is an intimate connection between the mind and the food. A heavy meal is harmful. Take a full meal at 11 a.m. and half a seer of milk at night. The night meal should be light for those who meditate.

Every human being has within himself various potentialities and capacities. He is a magazine of power and knowledge. As he evolves, he unfolds new powers, new faculties and new qualities. Now he can change his environments and influence others. He can subdue other minds. He can conquer internal and external nature. He can enter into superconscious state.

In a dark room if a pot, containing a lamp inside it, is broken, the darkness of the room is dispelled and you see light everywhere in the room. Even so, if the body-pot is broken through constant meditation on the Self, i.e., if you destroy ignorance (Avidya) and its effect such as identification with the body, and rise above body-consciousness, you will cognise the supreme light of the Atman everywhere.

Pose or Asana is really mental. Try to have a mental Padma or mental Siddha Asana. If the mind is wandering, you cannot have steady body or a steady physical pose. When the mind is steady or fixed in Brahman, steadiness of the body automatically follows.

Constantly think of God. The mind should always move towards God. Fasten the mind with a fine silk-thread to the Lotus-Feet of Lord Siva or Hari. Do not allow any worldly thought to enter the mind. Do not allow the mind to think of any physical or mental enjoyment. When it indulges in these thoughts, give it a good hammering. Then it will move towards God. Just as the Ganga flows continuously towards the sea, thoughts of God should flow continuously towards the Lord. Just as the harmonious sound produced from the ringing of bells falls upon the ear in a continuous stream, so also the mind should come towards God in one continuous stream. There must be a continuous divine Vritti-Pravaha from the Sattvic mind towards God through continuous Sadhana.

To think of nothing is to attain the highest contemplation.

In Nididhyasana or profound and continued meditation, thinking ceases. There is only one idea of "Aham Brahma Asmi." When this idea is also given up, Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Sahaja Advaita-Nishtha ensues.

Man tries to grasp the abstract through forms. After the mind has been purified, an abstract image is formed in the purified mind by Sravana (listening to spiritual discourses and holy scriptures) and Brahma-Chintana. This abstract image melts later on in deep Nididhyasana. What is left behind is Chinmatra or Kevala Asti (Pure Existence alone).

The mind should be adored as Brahman. This is intellectual worship. This is Upasana-Vakya.

Mind is Brahman or God in manifestation. Mind is God in motion.

As Brahman is approachable by means of the mind it is only proper to meditate upon the mind as Brahman.

If the readers of works dealing with Atma-Jnana, who do take delight therein will not be hasty in longing for the fruits at once but will meditate regularly and gradually upon them, then the mind will by degrees be ripened and in the end, the endless Atman will be reached.

When you read a book with absorbed interest and attention, your mind gets fixed to the ideas. Even so, in Nirguna meditation of Brahman (formless Dhyana) the mind is fixed on one idea, viz., that of Atman.

You want for meditation a properly trained instrument (mind). It should be calm, clear, pure, subtle, sharp, steady and one-pointed. Brahman is pure and subtle and you need a pure and subtle mind to approach Brahman.

Sit in a lonely place in the Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana. Free yourself from all passions, emotions and impulses. Subjugate the senses. Withdraw the mind from objects. Now the mind will be calm, one-pointed, pure and subtle. With the help of this trained instrument and disciplined mind, contemplate on that one Infinite Self. Do not think of anything else.

Allow the one Brahmic idea to flow gently and continuously. Drive out foreign or extraneous worldly ideas gently. Try to keep up the Brahmakara Vritti by repeating OM or '*Aham Brahma Asmi*' mentally very often. The idea of Infinity, the idea of an ocean of Light, the idea of all Knowledge and all Ananda should accompany the mental repetition of OM. If the mind wanders, repeat verbally six times the long (Dirgha) Pranava with 3½ Matras. This process will remove the Vikshepa and all other obstacles.

Mind feels tired after hard and protracted work. It cannot therefore be Atman. Atman is the storehouse of all powers (Ananta Sakti). Mind is only an instrument of Atman. It should be properly disciplined. Just as you develop the physical body through gymnastics and various kinds of physical exercises, so also you have to train the mind through mental training, mental culture or mental drill.

Just as the salt melts in water, so also the Sattvic mind melts in silence, during meditation, in Brahman, its Adhishthana (substratum).

OM is the bow, mind is the arrow and Brahman is the mark to be aimed at. Brahman is to be hit or pierced by him whose thoughts are concentrated. Then he will be of the same nature (Tanmaya) with Brahman, as the arrow becomes one with the aim when it has pierced it.

The best and the most congenial time for the practice of meditation is unquestionably the Brahmamuhurta, i.e., from 4 to 6 a.m. That is the time when the mind is quite refreshed after an agreeable slumber, when the mind is calm and comparatively pure. It is like a clean blank sheet of paper. Only such a mind can be moulded into whatever shape you like. Moreover, the atmosphere also is charged with purity and goodness at this time.

All physical activities should be completely suspended, all attachments should be ruthlessly cut asunder completely for five or six years, if you want to practise Dhyana Yoga, if you want to realise God through concentration of mind. Newspaper-reading and correspondence with friends and relatives should be completely stopped, as they cause distraction of mind and strengthen the world-idea. Seclusion for a period of five or six years is indispensable.

Mind exists on account of "I." "I" exists on account of mind. "I" is only an idea in the mind. "Mind" and "I" are identical. If "I" vanishes, mind will also vanish and if mind vanishes, "I" will vanish. Destroy mind through Tattva-Jnana. Destroy the "I" through '*Aham Brahma Asmi*' Bhavana, through constant and intense Nididhyasana. When mind vanishes or thoughts cease, Nama-Rupa will cease to exist and the Goal is reached.

12. Three Sittings for Meditation

At the commencement, have two sittings only, one in the morning from 4 to 5 a.m., one at night from 6 to 8 p.m. After six months or one year, according to your mental calibre you can have three sittings, a third in the afternoon from 4 to 5 p.m. You can increase the period of concentration to two hours at each sitting. In summer, it is rather irksome and difficult owing to perspiration. So, have only two sittings during summer. The loss can be made up in winter. Winter is very favourable for meditation. You will find Rishikesh, Muni-ki-reti, admirably suitable for contemplative purposes. Winter and early part of spring are the best seasons for beginners to commence meditation. In winter the mind is not tired at all. You can meditate even for 24 hours without the least exhaustion. That is the reason why Sadhus select Rishikesh for meditation in winter. The period of meditation should be gradually increased with caution. The meditation should not be by fits and starts. It should be well-regulated and steady. You must always use your commonsense and reason throughout the Sadhana period. You should ascend the summit of Yoga gradually, slowly, stage by stage and step by step. You must not give up the practice even for a few days.

Meditation for one hour in the morning and for one hour in the evening must be practised by all to start with. The hours of practice must be gradually increased. Another important point is that the Brahmic feeling must be kept up all the twenty four hours. There must be an unceasing continuous flow of consciousness. You must not forget the idea of "Aham Brahma Asmi" or the Divine presence even for a single second. Forgetfulness of God is genuine death. It is real suicide. It is Atmadroha. This is the highest sin.

13. Qualifications for Practising Meditation

Before saturating the mind with thoughts of Brahman you will have to assimilate the divine ideas first. Assimilation first and then saturation. Then comes realisation at once without a moment's delay. Remember this triplet always: ASSIMILATION-SATURATION-REALISATION.

Your will should be rendered strong, pure and irresistible by more Atma-Chintana, eradication of Vasanas, control of the senses and more inner life. You must utilise every second on Sundays and holidays to your best spiritual advantages.

If you have tasted Rasagulla—a Bengal-sweetmeat—for a month, mental adhesion to Rasagulla comes in the mind. If you are in the company of Sannyasins, if you read books on Yoga, Vedanta, etc., a similar mental adhesion takes place in the mind for attaining God-consciousness. Mere mental adhesion will not help you much. Burning Vairagya, burning Mumukshutva, capacity for spiritual Sadhana, intense and constant application and Nididhyasana (meditation) are needed. Then only Self-knowledge is possible.

Leading a virtuous life is not by itself sufficient for God-realisation. Constant meditation is absolutely necessary. A good virtuous life only prepares the mind as a fit instrument for concentration and meditation. It is concentration and meditation that eventually lead to Self-realisation.

You will find very often these terms in the Gita—"*Manmanah, Matparah*." These terms connote that you will have to give your full mind, entire 100% mind, to God. Then only you will have Self-realisation. Even if one ray of mind runs outside, it is impossible to attain God-consciousness.

Just as you render the turbid water pure by the addition of clearing nut (strychnos potatorum), so also you will have to make the turbid mind, filled with Vasanas and false Sankalpas, pure by Brahma-Chintana (thinking and reflecting on the Absolute). Then only there will be true illumination.

You must not be too hasty in longing for the fruits at once, when you take to meditation. A young lady perambulated the Asvattha tree (Filicus Religiosa) 108 times for getting an offspring and then immediately touched her abdomen to see whether there was a child or not. It is simply foolishness. She will have to wait for some months. Even so, if you will meditate for some time regularly then the mind will be ripened and eventually you will get Atma-Sakshatkara (Self-realisation). Haste makes waste.

It behoves well that advanced Grihastha Yogic students (householders) will have to stop all the worldly activities when they advance in meditation, if they are really sincere. Work is a hindrance in meditation for advanced students. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the Gita "For a sage who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage who is enthroned in Yoga (state of Yogarudha), serenity (Sama) is called the means." Then work and meditation become incompatible like acid and alkali or fire and water or light and darkness.

You must daily increase your Vairagya, meditation and Sattvic virtues such as patience, perseverance, mercy, love, forgiveness, purity, etc. Vairagya and good qualities help meditation. Meditation increases the Sattvic qualities.

Have the one all-pervading Brahma Bhavana (feeling). Deny the finite body as a mere appearance. Try to keep up the feelings always.

Why do you close your eyes during meditation? Open your eyes, and meditate. You must keep your balance of mind even when you are in the bustle of a city. Then only you are perfect. In the beginning when you are a neophyte you can close your eyes to remove the distraction of mind, as you are very weak. But later on you must meditate with eyes open even during walking. Think strongly that the world is unreal, that there is no world, that there is Atman only. If you can meditate on Atman even when the eyes are open you will be a strong man. You will not be easily disturbed. You can meditate only when the mind is beyond all anxieties.

In meditation and concentration you will have to train the mind in a variety of ways. Then only the gross mind will become subtle (Sukshma).

All Vrittis such as anger, jealousy, hatred, etc., assume subtle forms when you practise Japa and meditation. They are thinned out. They should be destroyed in toto through Samadhi. Then only you are safe. Latent Vrittis will be waiting for opportunities to assume a grave and expanded form. You should be ever careful and vigilant.

Resist the fatal downward pull by the dark, antagonistic forces through regular meditation. Check the aimless wanderings of the mind through clear and orderly thinking. Hear not the false whispers of the lower mind. Turn your inner gaze to the divine centre. Do not be afraid of the severe setbacks that you will encounter in your journey. Be brave. March on boldly till you finally rest in your centre of eternal bliss.

In a big city there is much bustle and sound at 8 p.m. At 9 O'clock there is not so much bustle and sound. At 10 p.m. it is still reduced and at 11 p.m. it is much less. At 1 a.m. There is peace everywhere. Even so in the beginning of Yogic practices there are countless Vrittis in the mind. There is much agitation and tossing in the mind. Gradually the thought-waves subside. In the end all mental modifications are controlled. The Yogi enjoys perfect peace.

When you pass through a market in a big city, you will not be able to notice small sounds, but when you sit for common meditation with some of your friends in a quiet room in the morning, you will be able to detect even a little sneezing or coughing. Even so you are not able to find out the evil thoughts when you are engaged in some work or other, but you are able to detect them when you sit for meditation. Do not be afraid when evil thoughts pass through your mind when you sit for meditation. Do vigorous Japa and meditation. They will pass off soon.

When you meditate, disregard the substratum awakenings in the mind that arise out of the senses. Avoid carefully the comparisons with all other cross references and memories of ideas. Concentrate the whole energy of the mind on the one idea of God or Atman itself without any comparison with any other idea.

The student of Yoga should not possess much wealth as it will drag him to the worldly temptations. He can keep a little sum to meet the wants of the body. Economical independence will relieve the mind from anxieties and will enable him to continue the Sadhana uninterruptedly.

14. How Many Hours to Meditate

To start with, you can meditate for half an hour in the morning from 4 to 4.30 and for half an hour at night from 8 to 8.30. Morning time is best for meditation. The mind is refreshed after sound sleep. Further, Sattva predominates in the system as in the surrounding atmosphere. In the Yoga Vasishtha, Sri Vasishtha says, "O Rama, give $\frac{1}{4}$ mind for meditation in the beginning; $\frac{1}{4}$ mind for recreation; $\frac{1}{4}$ mind for study; $\frac{1}{4}$ mind for service of Guru. Then $\frac{3}{8}$ mind for meditation; $\frac{1}{8}$ mind for recreation; $\frac{3}{8}$ mind for study; $\frac{1}{8}$ mind for service of Guru." Here recreation means acts like washing, cleaning, etc. It does not mean golf play or rugby. This recreation is meant for relaxation of mind or diversion of mind after concentration and meditation. Otherwise the mind feels tired and refuses to work. Then give $\frac{1}{2}$ mind for meditation; $\frac{1}{2}$ mind for study. Increase the time of meditation gradually. After two months, increase the period to one hour, 4 to 5 a.m. and 8 to 9 p.m. After a year, increase the time to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours in the morning and $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours at night. In the third year two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening; in the fourth year three hours in the morning and three hours at night. This is for the vast majority of persons. An earnest Sadhaka with strong vitality and subtle intellect can meditate for six hours in the first year of his Sadhana. You must study congenial books as the Upanishads, the Yoga Vasishtha, the Gita, Viveka Chudamani, Avadhuta Gita along with meditation. Such study is very elevating. Six hours' study and six hours' meditation is very beneficial. This will eventually push you on to Nididhyasana for twenty-four hours.

15. Aids to Meditation

Mula Bandha in Meditation: When you sit in the Asana for doing Japa, contract the anus. This is termed Mula Bandha in Hatha Yogic practice. This helps concentration. This practice prevents the Apanavayu from moving downwards.

Kumbhaka in Meditation: Retain the breath as long as you can comfortably do so. This is Kumbhaka. This will considerably steady the mind and help concentration. You will feel intense spiritual bliss.

Yogic Diet: Take Mitahara, Sattvic diet. Overloading the stomach with rice, vegetable, dhal and bread brings sleep and interferes with Sadhana. A glutton or a sensualist, a dullard or a lazy man cannot practise meditation. A diet of milk renders the body very, very light. You can sit in one Asana for hours together with ease and comfort. If you feel weak, you can take for a day or two a little rice and milk or barley and milk or any light diet. Those who are in the field of service and who do platform lectures and other intense spiritual propaganda activities need solid, substantial food.

You will find very often these terms in the Gita: *Ananya Chetah*—no thinking of another; *Matchitta*, *Nitya Yukta, Manmanah; Ekagram Manah* and *Sarva-Bhava*. These terms denote that you will have to give your full mind, entire cent per cent, to God. Then only you will have Self-realisation. Even if one ray of mind runs outside, it is impossible to attain God-consciousness.

Be silent. Know thyself. Know That. Melt the mind in That. Truth is quite pure and simple.

16. Asanas for Meditation

Sit in Padma, Siddha, Svastika or Sukha Asana for half an hour to start with. Then increase the period to three hours. In one year you can have Asana-Siddhi. Any easy, comfortable posture is Asana.

PADMASANA

This is the lotus-pose. Place the right foot on the left thigh, the left foot on the right thigh. Put the hands on the thighs near the knee-joints. Keep the head, neck and the trunk in one straight line. Close the eyes and concentrate on the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows. This is called lotus-pose or Kamalasana. This is very good for meditation. This Asana is beneficial for householders.

SIDDHASANA

This is the perfect pose. This is a beautiful Asana for meditation. Place one heel at the anus or Guda, the terminal opening of the alimentary canal or digestive tube through which the excreta or faecal matter is thrown out. Keep the other heel at the foot of the generative organ and the hands on the knees. Close the eyes. Concentrate on the Trikuti or on the tip of the nose. Keep the head, neck and trunk in one straight line. Keep the hands as in Padmasana near the knee joints. This Asana is beneficial for Brahmacharins and Sannyasins.

SVASTIKASANA

Svastika is sitting at ease with the body erect. Place the right foot near the thigh and bring the left foot and push it between the right thigh and calf muscles. Now you will find the two feet between the thigh and calf muscles. This is Svastikasana.

SUKHASANA

Any easy comfortable posture for Japa and meditation is Sukhasana. The important point is that the head and the trunk should be straight. Here is a special variety of Sukhasana which is very comfortable for old people.

Take a cloth 5 cubits long and fold it lengthwise. Raise the knees to the chest level. Keep one end of it near the left knee. Take the other end, going to the back by the left side and right knee come to the left knee and make a knot there. Keep the hands between the knees. As the legs, hands, back-bone are all supported, one can sit in this Asana for a long time.

BENEFITS OF ASANAS

Asana removes many diseases such as piles, dyspepsia, constipation, and checks excessive Rajas. The body gets genuine rest from the posture. If you are established in Asana, if you are firm in your seat, then you can take up easily exercises in Pranayama. This is the third Anga or part of Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga of Patanjali.

First, there is self-restraint or practice of Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, etc. Second, there are religious canons or observances, such as Saucha, Santosha, Tapas, Svadhyaya, etc. Next comes Asana. When the Asana becomes steady, you will not feel the body. When you have obtained mastery in Asana, qualities of the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold will not trouble you then. You must sit in the Asana on an empty stomach. You can take a small cup of milk, tea or coffee before doing Asana.

Asana steadies the body. Bandhas and Mudras make the body firm. Pranayama makes the body light. Nadi Suddhi produces steadiness of the mind. Having acquired these qualifications you will have to fix the mind on Brahman. Then only meditation will go on steadily with ease and happiness. For meditation, concentration and Japa, Padmasana or Siddhasana is prescribed. For general health and keeping up of Brahmacharya, Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Matsyasana, Pachimottanasana are good.

17. Regularity in Meditation

Whatever spiritual practice you do, either Japa, practice of Asana, concrete meditation on Saguna-Murti or Pranayama, do it systematically and regularly every day. The reward of this practice is immense. You will get Immortality or Eternal life (Amritatvam). All desires will melt there. You will get Nitya Tripti.

Meditate, meditate. Concentrate, concentrate, my dear friends. Never miss even a single day owing to laziness. Laziness is the greatest enemy of a Sadhaka. Life is short, time is fleeting and obstacles are many in the spiritual path. Conquer them one by one by exertion and prayer. If you are sincere you will get various sorts of help from within, from without, from the helpers of the astral plane, from Jivanmuktas who are scattered in all parts of the world and from Amara-Purushas such as Sri Vyasa, Vasishtha, Kapila Muni, Dattatreya of Girnar Hills, Agastya Muni of Podia Hills, Tirunelveli.

Just as you take food four times, morning, noon, afternoon and night, so also you will have to meditate four times a day if you want to realise quickly. You must be systematic and regular in your meditation.

Just as cannabis indica, opium or alcohol gives you intoxication, even if you take a small quantity, and lasts for some hours, so also the God-intoxication that you get from regular meditation, lasts for some hours if you meditate for half an hour daily. Therefore be regular.

When you meditate, when you develop divine or Sattvic virtue, a spiritual road is constructed in the mind. If you are not regular in meditation, if your dispassion wanes, if you become careless and non-vigilant, the spiritual road will be washed away by the flood of impure thoughts and evil Vasanas. Therefore be regular in your meditation. Regularity in meditation is of paramount importance.

When you practise meditation, Japa, Kirtan, Pranayama or enquiry, worldly thoughts, cravings and Vasanas are suppressed. If you are irregular in meditation and if your dispassion wanes, they try to manifest again. They persist and resist. Therefore, be regular in your meditation and do more vigorous Sadhana. Cultivate more dispassion. They will be gradually thinned out and eventually destroyed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

1. Practical Aspect of Meditation

This world is full of miseries and sufferings. If you want to get rid of the pains and afflictions of this Samsara, you must practise meditation. Meditation leads to the knowledge of the Self, which brings about Eternal Peace and Supreme Bliss. Meditation prepares you for the integral experience or direct intuitive knowledge. Meditation is the flow of continuous thought of one thing or God or Atman. Meditation is the pathway to divinity. It is the royal road to the kingdom of Brahman. It is a mysterious ladder which reaches from earth to Heaven (Vaikuntha-Kailasa-Brahman), from error to Truth, from darkness to Light, from pain to Bliss, from restlessness to abiding Peace, from ignorance to Knowledge, from mortality to Immortality.

Truth is Brahman. Truth is Atman. You cannot realise the Truth without reflection and meditation. The mode of meditation differs according to the path adopted by the aspirant. A Bhakta practises Saguna Dhyana on the form of his Ishta Devata. A Hatha Yogi meditates on the Chakras and the presiding deities. A Jnana Yogi meditates on his own Self. He practises Ahamgraha Upasana. A Raja Yogi meditates on the special Purusha who is not affected by afflictions and desires.

The mind assumes the form of the object it cognises. Then only perception is possible. A Bhakta constantly meditates on the form of his tutelary deity or Ishta Devata. The mind always takes the form of the deity. When he is established in his meditation, when he attains the stage of Para Bhakti or supreme devotion, he sees his Ishta Devata only everywhere. The names and forms vanish. A devotee of Lord Krishna sees Lord Krishna only everywhere and experiences the state described in the Gita *"Vaasudevah Sarvam iti*—Everything is Vaasudeva only." A Jnani or a Vedanti sees his own Self or Atman everywhere. The world of names and forms vanishes from his view. He experiences the utterances of the seers of the

Upanishads: "*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*—All indeed is Brahman."

You must have a pure mind if you want to realise the Self. Unless the mind is set free and casts away all desires, cravings, worries, delusion, pride, lust, attachment, likes and dislikes, it cannot enter into the domain of Supreme Peace and unalloyed felicity—the Immortal Abode. A glutton or a sensualist, a dullard or a lazy man, cannot practise meditation. He who has controlled the tongue and other organs, who has an acute acumen, who eats, drinks and sleeps in moderation, who has destroyed selfishness, lust, greed and anger, can practise meditation and attain success in Samadhi.

You cannot enjoy peace of mind and cannot practise meditation if there is Vikshepa in your mind. Vikshepa is tossing of mind. Vikshepa is Rajas. Vikshepa and desires co-exist in the mind. If you really want to destroy Vikshepa, you must destroy all mundane desires and cravings through dispassion and self-surrender to the Lord.

If you apply fire to a green wood, it will not burn; if you apply fire to a piece of dried wood, it will at once catch fire and burn. Even so, those who have not purified their minds, will not be able to start the fire of meditation. They will be sleeping or dreaming—building castles in the air—when they sit for meditation. But those who have removed the impurities in their minds by Japa, service, charity, Pranayama, etc., will enter into deep meditation as soon as they sit for meditation. The pure, ripe mind will at once burn with the fire of meditation.

Mind is compared to a garden. Just as you can cultivate good flowers and fruits in a garden by ploughing and manuring the land, by removing the weeds and thorns and by watering the plants and trees, so also you can cultivate the flower of devotion in the garden of your mind by removing the impurities of the mind, such as lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, etc., and watering it with divine thoughts. Weeds and thorns grow in the rainy season, disappear in summer, but their seeds remain underneath the ground. As soon as there is a shower, the seeds again germinate and sprout out. Even so, the Vrittis (modifications of the mind) manifest on the surface of the conscious mind, then disappear and assume a subtle seed-state, the form of Samskaras or impressions. The Samskaras again become Vrittis either through internal or external stimulus. When the garden is clean, when there are no weeds and thorns you can get good fruits. So also, when the mind is pure, when the mind is free from lust, anger, etc., you can have the fruit of good, deep meditation. Therefore cleanse the mind of its impurities first. Then the current of meditation will flow by itself.

If you want to keep a garden always clean, you will have to remove not only the weeds and thorns and other small plants but also the seeds that lie underneath the ground which again germinate during rainy season. Even so, you will have to destroy not only the big waves or Vrittis of the mind but also the Samskaras which are the seeds for births and deaths, which generate Vrittis again and again, if you want to enter into Samadhi and attain liberation or perfect freedom.

Without the help of meditation, you cannot attain knowledge of the Self. Without its aid, you cannot grow into the divine state. Without it, you cannot liberate yourself from the trammels of the mind and attain Immortality. If you do not practise meditation, the supreme splendour and fadeless glories of Atman will remain hidden from you. Tear the veils that cover the soul by practising regular meditation. Rend asunder the five sheaths that screen the Atman by constant meditation and then attain the final beatitude of life.

2. Real Rest in Meditation

Fatigue of the Indriyas demands rest. Hence sleep supervenes at night rhythmically. Motion and rest are rhythmical processes in life. The mind moves about in the avenues of the senses through the force of the Vasana. Strictly speaking, Dridha Sushupti is very, very rare. There is subtle working of the mind in dream also. Hence you do not get good rest in sleep. Real rest is secured in meditation and meditation only. It is only Dhyana Yogis who practise meditation that can feel real rest in meditation. The mind is fully concentrated during meditation. It is far away from objects and very near to the Atman. There are no Ragadvesha currents during meditation owing to absence of objects. Consequently, there is manifestation of solid, lasting, real spiritual Ananda with complete, genuine rest. You must feel it yourself. Then, you will agree with me. In Benares, there is a Hatha Yogi who does levitation. He never sleeps at night. He sits in the Asana during the whole night. He gets the real rest from meditation. He has dispensed with sleep. You may not enjoy the rest fully in the beginning of your practice, because at the outset there is a good deal of wrestling between the will and Svabhava, the old Samskaras and the new Samskaras, old habits and new habits, Purushartha and old conduct. The mind revolts. When the mind is thinned out, when you have reached the Tanumanasi state, third Jnana Bhumika, you will enjoy good rest in meditation. You can then cut short your sleep to three or four hours gradually.

3. Visualisation

Gaze at the picture of the Lord, your Ishta Devata for a few minutes and close your eyes. Then try to visualise the picture mentally. You will have a well-defined or clear-cut picture of the Lord. When it fades, open your eyes and gaze again. Repeat the process five or six times. You will be able to visualise clearly your Ishta Devata or tutelary deity mentally after some months' practice.

If you find it difficult to visualise the whole picture try to visualise any part of the picture. Try to produce even a hazy picture. By repeated practice the hazy picture will assume a well-defined, clear-cut form. If you find this difficult, fix the mind on the effulgent Light in the heart and take this as the form of the Lord or Devi.

Do not bother yourself if you are not able to have perfect visualisation of the picture of the Lord with closed eyes. Continue your practice vigorously and regularly. You will succeed. What is wanted is Prema for the Lord. Cultivate this more and more. Let it flow unceasingly and spontaneously. This is more important than visualisation.

4. Yoga of Meditation

In the beginning you can meditate twice daily, from 4 to 6 in the morning and 7 to 8 at night. As you advance in your practices you can increase the duration of each sitting little by little using your common-sense and discretion, and also have a third sitting either in the morning between 10 and 11 or in the evening between 4 and 5.

In the Yoga-Vasishtha you will find: "The right course to be adopted by one who is in his novitiate is this: Two parts of the mind must be filled with the objects of enjoyment, one part with philosophy and the remaining part with devotion to the teacher. Having advanced a little, he should fill one part of the mind with the objects of enjoyment, two parts with devotion to the teacher and remaining one with getting an insight into the meaning of philosophy. When one has attained proficiency, he should every day fill two parts of his mind with philosophy and supreme renunciation and remaining two parts with meditation and devoted service to the Guru. This will eventually lead you on to meditation for twenty-four hours."

Sitting in your favourite meditative pose and keeping the head and trunk erect, close your eyes and gently concentrate on either the tip of the nose or space between the two eyebrows or the heart-lotus of the crown of the head. When once you have selected one centre of concentration, stick to it till the last with leech-like tenacity. Never change it. Thus, if you have chosen to concentrate on the heart-lotus after having tried other centres, stick to the heart-lotus alone. Then only you can expect rapid advancement.

Meditation is of two kinds viz., Saguna (with Gunas or qualities) meditation, and Nirguna (without Gunas or qualities) meditation. Meditation on Lord Krishna, Lord Siva, Lord Rama or Lord Jesus is Saguna meditation. It is meditation with form and attributes. The Name of the Lord is also simultaneously repeated. This is the method of the Bhaktas. Meditation on the reality of the Self is Nirguna meditation. This is the method of the Vedantins. Meditation on Om, Soham, Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi and Tat Tvam Asi, is Nirguna meditation.

The wise cut asunder the knot of egoism by the sharp sword of constant meditation. Then dawns supreme knowledge of the Self or full illumination or Self-realisation. The liberated sage has neither doubt nor delusion. All bonds of Karma (action) are rent asunder. Therefore be ever engaged in meditation. This is the master-key to open the realms of Eternal Bliss. It may be disgusting and tiring in the beginning, because the mind will be running away from the point (Lakshya) every now and then. But after some time it will be focussed in the centre. You will be immersed in Divine Bliss.

When you get a flash of illumination, do not be frightened. It will be a new experience of immense joy. Do not turn back. Do not give up meditation. Do not stop there. You will have to advance still further. This is only a glimpse of truth. This is not the whole experience. This is not the highest realisation. This is only a new platform. Try to ascend further. Reach the Bhuma or the Infinite. Now alone you are proof against all temptations. You will drink deep the nectar of Immortality. This is the acme or final state. You can take eternal rest now. You need not meditate any further. This is the final goal.

You have within yourself tremendous powers and latent faculties of which you have really never had any conception. You must awaken these dormant powers and faculties by the practice of meditation and Yoga. You must develop your will and control your senses and mind. You must purify yourself and practise regular meditation. Then only you can become a Superman or God-man.

Every human being has within himself various potentialities and capacities. He is a magazine of power and knowledge. As he evolves he unfolds new powers, new faculties and new qualities. Now he can change his environment and influence others. He can subdue other minds. He can conquer internal and external nature. He can enter into superconscious state.

Just as the light is burning within the hurricane lamp, so also the Divine Flame is burning from time immemorial in the lamp of your heart. Close your eyes. Merge yourself within the Divine Flame. Plunge deep into the chambers of your heart. Meditate on this Divine Flame and become one with the Flame of God.

If the wick within the lamp is small, the light will also be small. If the wick is big, the light also will be powerful. Similarly if the Jiva (individual soul) is pure, if he practises meditation, the manifestation or expression of the Self will be powerful. He will radiate a big light. If he is unregenerate and impure, he will be like a burnt up charcoal. The bigger the wick, the greater the light. Likewise, the purer the soul, the greater the expression.

If the magnet is powerful, it will influence the iron filings even when they are placed at a distance. Even so, if the Yogi is an advanced person, he will have greater influence over the persons with whom he comes in contact. He can exert his influence on persons even when they live in distant places.

During meditation, note how long you can shut out all worldly thoughts. Watch your mind. If it is for twenty minutes, try to increase the period to thirty minutes and so on. Fill the mind with thoughts of God again and again.

"Though men should perform Tapas, standing on one leg for a period of 1,000 years, it will not, in the least, be equal to one-sixteenth part of Dhyana Yoga (meditation)."—*Pingala Upanishad.*

You must daily increase your Vairagya, meditation and Sattvic virtues such as patience, perseverance, mercy, love, forgiveness, etc. Vairagya and good qualities help meditation. Meditation increases the Sattvic qualities.

Considerable changes take place in the mind, brain and nervous system by the practice of meditation. New nerve-currents, new vibrations, new avenues, new grooves, new cells and new channels are formed. The whole mind and the nervous system are remodelled. You will have a new heart, a new mind, new sensations, new feelings, new mode of thinking and acting and a new view of the universe (as God in manifestation).

During meditation you will get into rapture or ecstasy. It is of five kinds viz., the lesser thrill, momentary rapture, flooding rapture, transporting rapture, and all-pervading rapture. The lesser thrill will raise the hair of the body (like the goose-skin). The momentary rapture is like the productions of lightning moment by moment. Like waves breaking on the seashore, the flooding rapture descends rapidly on the body and breaks. Transporting rapture is strong and lift the body up to the extent of launching it into the air. When the all-pervading rapture arises, the whole body is completely surcharged and blown like a full bladder.

"Whatever he (the Yogic practitioner) sees with his eyes, let him consider as Atman. Whatever he hears with his ears, let him consider as Atman. Whatever he smells with his nose, let him consider as Atman. Whatever he tastes with his tongue, let him consider as Atman. Whatever the Yogi touches with his skin, let him consider as Atman. The Yogi should thus unwearied gratify his organs of sense for a period of one Yama (3 hours) every day with great effort. Various wonderful powers are attained by the Yogi, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, ability to transport himself to great distances within a moment, great power of speech, ability to take any form, ability to become invisible, and the transmutation of iron into gold, when the former is smeared over with his excretion."—*Yogatattva Upanishad.*

Leading a virtuous life is not by itself sufficient for God-realisation. Concentration of mind is absolutely necessary. A good virtuous life only prepares the mind as a fit instrument for concentration and meditation that eventually lead to Self-realisation or God-realisation.

5. Seclusion and Meditation

Ekanath, Raja Janaka and others realised by doing spiritual Sadhana while remaining in the world. The central teaching of the Gita is to realise in and through the world. This is plausible, sounds all right, but not feasible for the vast majority. It is easier said than done. How many Janakas and Ekanaths have you had? These people were really Yoga Bhrashtas. It is absolutely impossible for the vast majority.

Lord Jesus was missing for 18 years. Buddha went into seclusion for 8 years in Uruvala forest. Swami Rama Tirtha was a recluse in Brahmapuri forest for two years. Sri Aurobindo teaches that one should realise amidst activity, but he had shut himself up in a closed room for 40 years. Many had taken up seclusion during Sadhana period. You can make the beginning in the world but when you have made some progress, you must shift yourself up for advanced practices to a suitable place where you will find spiritual vibration and solitude.

As the will-power in many persons has become very weak, as they have no religious discipline or training in schools and colleges when they were young, as they are under the sway of materialistic influences, it is necessary for them to go in seclusion for some weeks, months or years to practise rigorous Japa and undisturbed meditation.

Calm the bubbling emotions, sentiments, instincts and impulses through silent meditation. You can give a new orientation to your feelings by gradual and systematic practice. You can entirely transmute your worldly nature into Divine nature. You can exercise supreme control over the nerve-centres, the nerves, muscles, the five Koshas or sheaths, emotions, impulses and instincts through meditation.

Those who have fixed up their sons in life, who have retired from service and those who have no ties or attachment in the world, can remain in seclusion for 4 or 5 years and practise intense meditation and Tapas for purification and Self-realisation. This is like entering a University for higher studies or post-graduate course. When the Tapas is over, when they have attained Self-knowledge, they should come out and share their knowledge and bliss with others. They should disseminate knowledge of the Self through lectures, conversations, discourses or heart to heart talks according to their capacity and disposition.

A householder (Grihastha) with Yogic tendencies and spiritual inclinations can practise meditation in a solitary and quiet room in his own house or any solitary place on the banks of any holy river, during holidays or throughout the year if he is a whole-time aspirant or if he is retired from service.

If you want to retire into solitude for the practice of meditation, if you are a householder with spiritual thirsting for intense Sadhana, you cannot all of a sudden sever your connection with your family people. Sudden severance from worldly ties and possessions will give you intense mental agony and induce shock on your family people. You will have to break the ties gradually. Stay for a week or a month in seclusion to begin with. Then gradually prolong the period. Then they will not feel the pangs of separation.

The aspirant should be free from hope, desire and greed. Then only he will have a steady mind. Hope, desire and greed make the mind ever restless and turbulent; they are the enemies of peace and Self-knowledge. He should not have many possessions also. He can only keep those articles which are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his body. If there are many possessions, the mind will be ever thinking of the articles and attempting to protect them. Those who want quick progress in meditation during seclusion should not keep any connection with the world by way of correspondence, reading newspapers, or thinking of the family-members and possessions.

He who has reduced his wants, who has not a bit of attraction for the world, who has discrimination and dispassion, burning desire for liberation, who has observed Mouna for months together, will be able to live in seclusion.

The aspirant should possess serenity. The Divine Light can descend only in a serene mind. Serenity is attained by the eradication of Vasanas or desires and cravings. He should be fearless also. This is the most important qualification. A timid or cowardly aspirant is very far from Self-realisation.

The aspirant need not bother about his bodily wants. Everything is provided for by God. Everything is prearranged by Mother Prakriti. She looks after the bodily wants of all very carefully in a more efficient manner than they themselves would do. Prakriti knows in a better manner what the requirements are and provides them then and there. Understand the mysterious ways of Mother and become wise. Be grateful to Her for Her unique kindness, grace and mercy.

Semen or vital juice tones the nerves and brain and energises the system. He who has preserved his vital force by the vow of celibacy and sublimated it to Ojas-Sakti, can practise steady meditation for a long period. He only can ascend the ladder of Yoga. Without Brahmacharya no iota of spiritual progress is possible. Brahmacharya is the very foundation on which the superstructure of meditation and Samadhi can be built up. Many people waste this vital energy—a great spiritual treasure indeed—when they become blind and lose their power of reason under excitement. Pitiable indeed is their lot! They cannot make any substantial progress in Yoga.

You should have perfect control over the body through regular practice of Asanas before you take up serious and constant meditation. You cannot practise meditation without a firm seat. If the body is unsteady, the mind will also become unsteady. There is intimate connection between the body and the mind. You should not shake the body even a bit. You should attain mastery over the Asana by daily practice, viz., Asana Jaya. You should be as firm as a statue or a rock. If you keep the body, head and neck erect, the spinal cord also will be erect, the Kundalini will rise up steadily through Sushumna. You will not be overpowered by sleep.

If you are well established in the practice of Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), if you have the senses under your full control, you can find perfect solitude and peace even in the most crowded and noisy places of a big city. If the senses are turbulent, if you have not got the power to withdraw the senses, you will have no peace of mind even in a solitary cave in the Himalayas. A disciplined Yogi who has controlled his senses and the mind can enjoy peace of mind in a solitary cave. A passionate man who has not controlled the senses and the mind will be only building castles in the air if he lives in a solitary cave in the mountains.

You should steadily direct your gaze towards the tip of your nose (Nasikagra Drishti) and keep the mind fixed in the Self only. In Sloka 25 of chapter V (Gita) Lord Krishna says, "Having made the mind abide in the Self, let him not think of anything." The other gaze (Drishti) is Bhrumadhya Drishti or gazing between the two eyebrows (Ajna Chakra). This is described in the Gita (V-27). In this Drishti direct the gaze towards Ajna Chakra with closed eyes. If you practise the Drishti with open eyes it may produce headache. Foreign particles may fall into the eyes. There may be distraction of the mind also. Do not strain the eyes. Practise gently. When you practise concentration on the tip of the nose, you will experience Divya Gandha (divine fragrance). When you concentrate on the Ajna Chakra, you will experience Divya Jyotis (divine light). This is an experience to give you encouragement, to push you up in the spiritual path and convince you of the existence of transcendental or superphysical things. Do not stop your Sadhana now. Yogins or those Bhaktas who meditate on Lord Siva concentrate on the Ajna Chakra. You can select that Drishti which suits you best.

Make the mind one-pointed by collecting all the dissipated rays of the mind. Withdraw the mind from all sense-objects again and again and try to fix the mind on your Lakshya or point of meditation or centre. Gradually you will have concentration of mind or one-pointedness. You must be patient and persevering. You must be very regular in your practice. Then only you will succeed. Regularity is of paramount importance.

You should know the ways and habits of the mind through daily introspection, self-analysis or self-examination. You should have knowledge of the laws of the mind. Then it will be easy for you to check the mind-wandering. When you sit for meditation, when you deliberately attempt to forget the worldly objects, all sorts of worldly thoughts irrelevant and nonsensical thoughts, will crop up in your mind and, disturb your meditation. You will be quite astonished. Old thoughts which you entertained several years ago, old memories of past enjoyments will bubble up and force the mind to wander in all directions. You will find that the trapdoor of the vast magazine of thoughts and memories within the subconscious mind is opened or the lid of the storehouse of thoughts within is lifted up and the thoughts gush out in a continuous stream. The more you attempt to still them the more they will bubble up with redoubled force and strength.

Do not be discouraged. *Nil desperandum*. Never despair. Through regular and constant meditation you can purify the subconscious mind and can control all thoughts and memories. The fire of meditation will burn all thoughts. Be sure of this. Meditation is a potent antidote to annihilate the poisonous worldly thoughts. Be assured of this.

During introspection you can clearly observe the shiftings of the mind from one line of thought to another. Herein lies a change for you to mould the mind properly and direct the thoughts and the mental energy in the Divine Channel. You can rearrange the thoughts, make new association on a new Sattvic basis. You can throw out useless worldly thoughts just as you remove the weeds and throw them out. You can cultivate sublime, Divine thoughts in the Divine garden of your mind or Antahkarana. This is a very patient work. This is a stupendous task indeed. But for a Yogi of self-determination, who has the grace of the Lord and iron-will, it is nothing.

Meditation on the Immortal Self will act like a dynamite and blow up all thoughts and memories in the subconscious mind. If the thoughts trouble you much, do not suppress them by force. Be a silent witness as in a bioscope. They will subside gradually. Then try to root them out through regular silent meditation.

The practice must be constant. Then only one can attain Self-realisation, surely and quickly. He who practises meditation by fits and starts for a few minutes daily will not be able to achieve any tangible result in Yoga.

How can sense-control be tested in a lonely forest, where there are no temptations? The Yogic student of the cave (seclusion) should test himself after growing sufficiently by entering the plains. But he should not test himself every now and then like the man who removed the young plant daily after watering to see if it had struck deep root or not.

May you all attain success in Yoga and enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi or the Blissful Union with the Lord by controlling the senses and the mind and practising regular and constant meditation.

6. Reach the Highest Peak

The wise cut asunder the knot of egoism by the sharp sword of constant meditation. Then dawns supreme knowledge of Self or full inner illumination or Self-realisation. The liberated sage has neither doubts nor delusions now. All the bonds of Karma are rent asunder. Therefore be ever engaged in meditation. This is the master-key to open the realms of Eternal Bliss. It may be tiring and disgusting in the beginning; because the mind will be running away from the point or Lakshya now and then. But after some practice it will be focussed in the centre. You will be immersed in Divine Bliss.

A mysterious inner voice will guide you. Hear this very attentively, dear Yogindra!

When you get a flash of illumination, do not be frightened. It will be a new experience of immense joy. Do not turn back. Do not give up meditation. Do not stop here. You will have to advance still further. This is only a glimpse of Truth. This is not the whole experience. This is not the highest experience or realisation. This is a new platform for you. Stand firmly now on this platform. Try to ascend further. Reach the Bhuma or the Infinite or the Unconditioned. You will drink deep the nectar continuously. This is the acme or final stage. You can take eternal rest now. You need not meditate any more.

If a pot with a lamp inside, which is placed in a dark room, is broken, the darkness of the room is dispelled and you see light everywhere in the room. Even so, if the body-pot is broken through the practice of constant meditation on Self, i.e., if you destroy Avidya and its effects (Deha-Adhyasa) and rise above body-consciousness, you will cognise the Supreme Light of Atman everywhere.

Just as the water in a pot that is placed in the ocean becomes one with the waters of the ocean when the pot is broken, so also when the body-pot is broken by meditation on the Atman, the individual soul becomes identical with the Supreme Self.

Just as the student creates interest in his study of mathematics or geometry, although it is disgusting in the beginning, by imagining the great advantage that he will gain by passing the examination, so also you will have to create interest in meditation by thinking of the incalculable benefits that will be derived by its constant practice, viz., Immortality, Supreme Peace and Infinite Bliss.

A man who has not seen Swami Ramakrishnananda who lives in Badrinarayan, hears all about the personality and attributes of the Swami from a man who has actually seen him and who knows him fully well and then tries to visualise a mental picture of him. Even so, the aspirant should hear all about the invisible, hidden Brahman from the sages who have attained Self-realisation and then meditate on the Atman or the Self.

Just as the light is burning within the hurricane lamp, so also the Divine Flame is burning from time immemorial in the lamp of your heart. Close your eyes, merge yourself within the Divine Flame. Plunge deep into the chambers of your heart. Meditate on this Divine Flame and become a Flame of God.

When you study a book with profound interest, you do not hear if a man shouts and calls you by your name. Then you do not smell the sweet fragrance of flowers kept on the table in the flower vase. This is concentration or one-pointedness of mind. The mind is fixed firmly on one thing. You must have such a deep concentration when you think of God or Atman. It is easy to concentrate the mind on a worldly object because the mind takes interest in it naturally through force of habit. The sensual grooves are already cut in the brain. You will have to train the mind gradually by daily practice of concentration, by fixing the mind again and again on the picture of God or the Self within. You will have to cut new spiritual grooves in the mind by practising daily meditation. This mind will not move now to external objects as it experiences immense joy from the practice of meditation.

The practice of concentration and the practice of Pranayama are interdependent. If you practise Pranayama, you will get concentration. Natural Pranayama follows the practice of concentration. A Hatha Yogi practises Pranayama and then controls the mind. He rises upwards from below. A Raja Yogi practises concentration and thus controls his Prana. He comes downwards from above. They both meet on a common platform in the end. There are different practices according to the different capacities, tastes and temperaments. To some the practice of Pranayama will be easy to start with; to others the practice of concentration will be easier. The latter had already practised Pranayama in their previous births. Therefore they take up, in this birth, the next limb of Yoga, i.e., concentration.

7. Errors in Meditation

A mixture of Tandri (drowsiness) and Manorajya (building castles in the air, reverie) is mistaken by aspirants for deep meditation and Samadhi. The mind appears to be established in concentration and free from Vikshepa (distraction). This is a mistake. Closely watch the mind. Remove these two serious obstacles through Vichara, Pranayama and light Sattvic diet. Be thoughtful, careful and vigilant. Stand for 10 minutes and dash cold water on the face and head, if drowsiness comes in.

Sometimes cupidity will stimulate a concentrated state. You are concentrated elsewhere, but not on the Lakshya. Watch this and withdraw the mind. Deep sleep state is mistaken by many for Samadhi. Samadhi is a positive, real state. It is all knowledge. Do not make mistakes. During meditation, when the mind passes into a calm state of Samata, when you feel a peculiar concentration—Ananda—think you are entering into Samadhi state. Do not disturb this state. Try your best to keep it for a long time. Mark this state very carefully.

Know things in their proper light. Do not be deluded. Emotion is mistaken for devotion; violent jumping in the air during Sankirtana for divine ecstasy; falling down in swoon on account of exhaustion from too much jumping for Bhava Samadhi; Rajasic restlessness and motion for divine activities and Karma Yoga; a Tamasic man for a Sattvic man; movement of air in rheumatism in the back for ascent of Kundalini; Tandri and deep sleep for Samadhi; Manorajya or building castles in the air for meditation; physical nudity for Jivanmukta state. Learn to discriminate and become wise.

Do not mistake Tandri for Savikalpa Samadhi and deep sleep for Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The glory of the state of Turiya or Bhuma is ineffable. Its splendour is indescribable. If the body is light, if the mind is clear, if there is cheerfulness; know that you are meditating. If the body is heavy, if the mind is dull, know that you were sleeping while meditating.

There is always a complaint amongst the aspirants: 'I am meditating for the last 12 years. I have not made any improvement. I have no realisation.' Why is it so? What is the reason? They have not plunged themselves in deep meditation into the innermost recesses of their hearts. They have not properly assimilated the mind with the thoughts of God. They have not done regular, systematic Sadhana. They have not disciplined Indriyas properly. They have not collected all the outgoing rays of the mind. They have not made the self-determination 'I will realise this very second.' They have not given full 100% of the mind to God. They have not kept an increasing flow of Divine Consciousness like the flow of oil (Tailadharavat).

Even if you do not feel any pulse in the Sadhaka when he is in meditation, even if the breathing stops, do not think that he is in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He should return with supersensual divine knowledge. Then only it can be said that he has attained real Samadhi. The breathing and pulse may stop from various other causes also. If one abstains from food and drink and practises a little concentration or even if he sits in the Asana steadily for some time, the breathing and pulse may stop. The Sadhaka must have perfect awareness in meditation. There is not much spiritual gain if he remains in a mere Jada state, even though he is insensible to external sounds.

Once two Sannyasins were deceived by another Sadhu who used to sit in meditation without pulse and breathing for several hours. Later on, he turned out to be a hypocrite. He cheated them and ran away with some money. You will have to be very careful in your judgment.

During meditation do not allow yourself to pass into a Jada state. Do not mistake this state for merging in the Lord or communion. Remaining in a Jada state for some hours is not desirable. It is like deep sleep. This will not help you in your spiritual evolution. If this time is spent in doing Japa, Kirtan, Mantra-writing and study of sacred books, you will have quick evolution. Be on the alert. Watch vigilantly. If there is real merging or real deep meditation, you must have peace, bliss and divine knowledge. You must be free from doubts, fear, delusion, egoism, anger, passion and Raga-Dvesha. Some dull inexperienced aspirants mistake this Jada state for Nirvikalpa Samadhi. They get false contentment and stop their Sadhana.

8. Instructions on Meditation

O aspirants! Struggle hard. Make sincere efforts. Meditate regularly and systematically. Never miss a day in meditation. There will be a great loss if you lose even a day.

No more words! Enough of discussions and heated debates. Retire into a solitary room. Close your eyes. Have deep silent meditation. Feel His presence. Repeat His name—OM—with fervour, joy and love. Fill your heart with Prema. Destroy the Sankalpas, thoughts, whims, fancies and desires when they arise from the surface of the mind. Withdraw the wandering mind and fix it on the Lord. Now Nishtha, meditation, will become deep and intense. Do not open your eyes. Do not stir from the seat. Merge in Him. Dive deep into the recesses of the heart. Plunge into the shining Atman. Drink the nectar of Immortality. Enjoy the silence now. I shall leave you there alone, Nectar's sons! Rejoice, rejoice! Peace! Silence! Glory!

O beloved Rama! You are within a strong spiritual fortress now. No temptation can influence you. You are absolutely safe. You can do vigorous Sadhana now without fear. You have a strong spiritual prop to lean upon. Become a brave soldier. Kill your foe, the mind, ruthlessly. Wear the spiritual laurels of peace, equal vision and contentment. You are already shining with Brahmic splendour in your face. The All-merciful Lord has given you all sorts of comforts, good health and a Guru to guide you. What more do you want? Grow. Evolve. Realise the Truth and proclaim it everywhere.

Clarify your ideas again and again. Think clearly. Have deep concentration and right thinking. Introspect in solitude. Purify your thoughts to a considerable degree. Still the thoughts. Silence the bubbling mind. Just as in a surgical clinic the assistant surgeon allows only one patient to enter the consultation room and the operation theatre of a hospital, so also you will have to allow one thought-wave only to rise from the mind and settle down calmly. Then allow another thought to enter. Drive off all extraneous thoughts that have nothing to do with the subject matter on hand. An efficient control over thoughts through long practice is a great help in meditation.

Watch every thought very carefully. Shut out all useless thoughts from the mind. Your life must tally with your meditation. You keep up your meditation during work also. Do not give new strength to evil thoughts by constant thinking. Restrain them. Substitute sublime thoughts. Control of thought is *sine qua non*. You should not waste even a single thought.

Quiet the mind. Silence the thoughts. Still the outgoing tendencies or energies of the mind. Collect all the wandering thoughts.

Do not store in your brain needless information. Learn to unmind the mind. Forget whatever you have learnt. It is useless for you now. Then only you can fill your mind with Divine thoughts in meditation. You will gain fresh mental strength now.

A goldsmith converts 13 carat gold into pure 15 carat gold by adding acids and burning it several times in the crucible. Even so, you will have to purify your sensuous mind through concentration, reflection on the word of your spiritual preceptor and Upanishadic sentences or meditation, Japa or silent repetition of the name of the Lord.

Positive overpowers the negative. A positive thought drives off a negative one. Courage drives off fear. Love destroys hatred. Unity annihilates separateness. Magnanimity destroys petty-mindedness (jealousy). Generosity drives away miserliness and greed. Keep yourself always positive. You will have wonderful meditation.

Be silent. Know thyself. Know That. Melt the mind in That. Truth is quite pure and simple. Solitude and intense meditation are two important requisites for Self-realisation. Drive off negative thoughts. Become positive always. Positive overpowers negative. You can do nice meditation when you are positive.

Whatever that elevates you, you can take it up for your advantage, just to elevate the mind and then continue your prolonged meditation.

If interruption comes in your Sadhana, make up the deficiency or loss in the evening or at night or on the following morning. Meditation is the only valuable asset for you. Success in Yoga is possible only if the aspirant practises profound and constant meditation. He must practise self-restraint at all times, because all of a sudden the senses may become turbulent. That is the reason why Lord Krishna advises Arjuna, "O son of Kunti, the excited senses of even a wise man, though he be striving impetuously, carry away his mind. Such of the roving senses as the mind yieldeth to, hurry away the understanding just as the gale hurries away a ship upon the waters."

Mind is ever-changing and wandering. This wandering habit of the mind manifests itself in various ways. You will have to be on the alert always to check this wandering habit of the mind. A householder's mind wanders to cinema, theatre, circus, etc. A Sadhu's mind will wander to Varanasi, Brindavan, Nasik, etc. Many Sadhus never stick to one place during Sadhana. The wandering habit of the mind must be controlled by making it stick to one place, one method of Sadhana, one Guru and one form of Yoga. A rolling stone gathers no moss. When you take up a book for study, you must finish it before you take up another. When you take up any work, you must devote your whole-hearted attention towards the work on hand and finish it before you take up another work. One thing at a time.

Those people who have not practised any Yogic discipline or curbing of the senses, Vrittis or impurities, will find it difficult to practise concentration and meditation. Their minds will be ever oscillating like the pendulum of a clock. Their minds will be ever roaming about like the wild bull or the monkey.

Do not cause pain or suffering to any living being through greed, selfishness, irritability, and annoyance. Give up anger or ill-will. Give up the spirit of fighting, heated debates. Do not argue. If you quarrel with somebody or if you have a heated debate with anybody, you cannot meditate for 3 or 4 days. Your balance of mind will be upset. Much energy will be wasted in useless channels. The blood will become hot. The nerves will be shattered. You must try your level best to keep a serene mind always. Meditation can proceed from a serene mind only. A serene mind is a valuable spiritual asset for you.

An aspirant must be sensitive and yet possess the body and nerves completely under control. The greater the sensitiveness becomes, the more difficult is the task. There are many noises which pass unheeded by an ordinary person but which are torturous to one who is very sensitive.

Centralise your idea and develop thereby the inner power of the Self. Centralisation of ideas will stop the outgoing habit of the mind and will develop the powers of the mind. Centralisation of ideas means centralisation of your energy.

Energy is wasted in useless idle talks and gossiping, planning and unnecessary worry (Chinta). Conserve energy by getting rid of these three defects and utilise it in meditation on God. You can do wonderful meditation then. If you want to do some dynamic worldly activities for world-solidarity (Lokasangraha) you can turn out marvellous work by conserving the energy which leaks through useless channels.

Just as the man who foolishly runs after two rabbits, will not catch hold of any one of them, so also a meditator who runs after two conflicting thoughts will not get success in any one of the two thoughts. If he has Divine thoughts for ten minutes and then worldly conflicting thoughts for the next ten minutes he will not succeed in getting at the Divine consciousness. You must run after one rabbit only with vigour, strength and one-pointed mind. You are sure to catch it. You must have only Divine thoughts at all times. Then you are sure to realise God soon.

He who says and imagines: "I practise deep meditation daily," when he has not removed the evil traits or qualities or Vikaras of the mind, deceives himself first and then others. He is a first-class confirmed hypocrite.

If you strain yourself in meditation and go beyond your capacity, laziness and inactive nature will supervene. Meditation should come naturally on account of serenity of the mind induced by the practice of Sama, Dama, Uparati and Pratyahara. Atman is the fountain of energy. Thinking on Atman or the source for energy also is a dynamic method for augmenting energy, strength and power.

Conserve the energy by talking a little, observing Mouna, controlling anger, observing Brahmacharya, practising Pranayama and controlling irrelevant and non-essential thoughts. You will have abundant energy at your disposal by having recourse to the above practices. You can move heaven and earth now.

Abandon ruthlessly all sensual objects. They are the wombs of pain. Develop gradually balance of mind. Subdue the senses. Annihilate lust, anger and greed. Meditate and behold the imperishable Atman. Rest yourself firmly in the Self. Nothing can hurt you now. You can become invincible.

PASSIONATE MAN

What does a passionate man do? He repeats the same ignominous act again and again and fills his stomach as many times as he can. What does an aspirant with burning passion for Self-realisation do? He takes a little milk and repeats the process of meditation again and again, whole day and night and enjoys the eternal bliss of the Self. Both are busy in their own ways. The former is caught in the wheel of births and deaths and latter attains Immortality. The mind can be controlled by continuous practice. You must keep it always occupied in divine contemplation. If you slacken your efforts idle thoughts will at once enter. Continuous practice only can bring the mind under control easily.

VAIRAGYA NECESSARY

If you wish to attain success in Yoga, you will have to abandon all worldly enjoyments and practise Tapas and Brahmacharya. Tapas and Brahmacharya will help you in the attainment of concentration and Samadhi.

When you start a fire you heap some straw, pieces of paper and thin pieces of wood. If the fire gets extinguished quickly you start it again several times by blowing through the mouth or the blow-pipe. After some time it becomes a small conflagration. You can hardly extinguish it now even with great efforts. Even so in the beginning of meditation the beginners fall down from meditation in their old grooves. They will have to lift up their minds again and again and fix them on the Lakshya. When the meditation becomes deep and steady, they get established in God eventually. Then the meditation becomes Sahaja. It becomes habitual. Use the blow-pipe of Tivra Vairagya and intense concentration to kindle the fire of meditation.

VIGILANCE

You will have to note very carefully whether you remain stationary in the spiritual path even after many years of spiritual practice or whether you are progressing. Sometimes you go downwards also if you are slack in meditation. Reaction may set in. Some practise meditation for a period of 15 years and yet they do not make any real progress at all. This is due to lack of earnestness, Vairagya, keen longing for liberation and intense Sadhana.

If the aspirant has the nature of being offended for trifling things, he cannot make any progress in meditation. He should cultivate amiable loving nature and adaptability. Then this bad habit will vanish. Some aspirants get easily offended if their bad qualities and defects are pointed out. They become indignant and begin to fight with the man who shows the defects. They think the man is concocting them out of jealousy or hatred. This is bad. Other people can very easily find out our defects. A man who has no life of introspection, whose mind is of outgoing tendencies, cannot find out his own mistakes. The self-conceit acts as a veil and blurs the mental vision. If an aspirant wants to grow, he must admit his defects if they are pointed out by others. He must try his level best to eradicate them and must thank the man who points out his defects. Then only he can grow in spirituality.

A glutton or sensualist, a dullard or a lazy man cannot practise meditation. He who has controlled the tongue and other organs, who has an acute acumen, who eats, drinks and sleeps in moderation, who has destroyed selfishness, lust, greed and anger can practise meditation and attain success in Samadhi.

Vikshepa is a great obstacle in meditation. Murty-upasana, Pranayama, Trataka, chanting of Dirgha Pranava (long OM), Manana, Vichara, Prayer, will remove this serious impediment. Vikshepa is tossing of mind. Destroy desires. Give up planning and scheming. Stop all Vyavahara and Pravritti for some time.

VIPARITA BHAVANA

Viparita Bhavana (wrong conception that the self is the body and the world is a solid reality) and Samsaya Bhavana (doubt) overpower you. Just as water leaks out into the rat-holes in agricultural fields, so also energy is wasted in wrong channels through Raga (attraction) for objects and undercurrent and lurking subtle desires. Suppressed desires also will manifest and harass you. You will unconsciously become a victim of those desires.

REACTION

When you begin to sweep a room that was kept closed for six months, various kinds of dirt come out from the corners of the room. Similarly during meditation under pressure of Yoga, through the Grace of God, various kinds of impurities float about on the surface of the mind. Bravely remove them one by one by suitable methods and counter-virtues with patience and strenuous efforts. The old vicious Samskaras revenge when you try to suppress them. Do not be afraid. They lose their strength after some time. You have to tame the mind just as you tame a wild elephant or a tiger. Do not indulge in vicious thoughts which serve as food for the mind. Make the mind Antarmukha (self-introspective). Substitute good, virtuous sublime thoughts. Feed the mind with ennobling aspirations and ideas. Old vicious Samskaras will be gradually thinned out and eventually obliterated.

Untrained aspirants generally mistake their own imaginations and impulses for the inner voice or Adesa (divine command). This is a grave pity. Sometimes the sight of a beautiful form gives pleasure to the mind. After all, mind wants pleasure. If the mind is trained to enjoy or taste the Bliss of the formless Brahman or the Self Who is seated in the hearts of all, by practice of meditation, it will not run to beautiful forms outside.

If you are not able to form the image of your Ishta Devata, if you are not able to fix the mind on your tutelary deity, you may try to hear the sound of the Mantra repeated by you or think of the letters of the Mantra in order. This will stop mind-wandering. This is all due to Vikshepa. There is no magical pill more efficacious than solitude to remove the disease of Vikshepa or tossing of mind caused by reactions of impure impressions.

Suppose the mind runs outside during meditation forty times within one hour. If you can make it run only 38 times it is decidedly a great improvement. You have gained some control over the mind. It demands strenuous practice for a long time to check the mind-wandering. Vikshepa is very powerful. But Sattva is more powerful than Vikshepa. Increase your Sattva. You can very easily control this oscillation of the mind.

9. Twenty Hints on Meditation

1. Have a separate meditation room under lock and key. Never allow anybody to enter the room. Burn incense there. Wash your feet and then enter the room.

2. Retire to a quiet place or room where you do not fear interruption so that your mind may feel secure and at rest. Of course, the ideal condition cannot always be obtained, in which case you should do the best you can. You should be alone yourself in communion with God or Brahman.

3. Get up at 4.00 a.m. (Brahmamuhurta) and meditate from 4 to 6 a.m. Have another sitting at night from 7 to 8 p.m.

4. Keep a picture of your Ishta Devata in the room and some religious books, the Gita, the Upanishads, the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bhagavata, etc. Spread your Asana in front of the picture.

5. Sit in Padma, Siddha, Sukha or Svastika Asana. Keep the head, neck and trunk in a straight line. Do not bend either forwards or backwards.

6. Close your eyes and concentrate gently on Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows. Lock the fingers.

7. Never wrestle with the mind. Do not use any violent efforts in concentration. Relax all the muscles and the nerves. Relax the brain. Gently think of your Ishta Devata. Slowly repeat your Guru Mantra with Bhava and meaning. Still the bubbling mind. Silence the thoughts.

8. Make no violent effort to control the mind, but rather allow it to run along for a while and exhaust its efforts. It will take advantage of the opportunity and will jump around like an unchained monkey at first, until it gradually slows down and looks to you for orders. It may take some time to tame the mind, but each time you try, it will come round to you in shorter time.

9. Have a background of thought, either a concrete background of your Ishta Murty along with the Mantra or an abstract background of the idea of Infinity with OM if you are a student of Jnana Yoga. This will destroy all other worldly thoughts and take you to the goal. Through force of habit the mind will at once take shelter in this background the moment you release it from worldly activities.

10. Again and again withdraw the mind from worldly objects when it runs away from the Lakshya and fix it there. This sort of combat will go on for some months.

11. When you meditate on Lord Krishna in the beginning, keep His picture in front of you. Look at it with steady gaze without winking the eyelids. See His feet first, then the yellow silk robe, then the ornaments around His neck, then His face, ear-rings, crown set with diamonds on head, then His armlets, bracelets, then His conch, disc, mace and lotus. Then come again to the feet. Now start again the same process. Do this again and again for half an hour. When you feel tired, look steadily on the face only. Do this practice for three months.

12. Then close your eyes and mentally visualise the picture and rotate the mind in the different parts as you did before.

13. You can associate the attributes of God as omnipotence, omniscience, purity, perfection, etc., during the course of your meditation.

14. If evil thoughts enter your mind, do not use your will-force in driving them. You will lose your energy only. You will tax your will only. You will fatigue yourself. The greater the efforts you make, the more the evil thoughts will return with redoubled force. They will return more quickly also. The thoughts will become more powerful. Be indifferent. Keep quiet. They will pass off soon. Or substitute good counter-thoughts (Pratipaksha-Bhavana method). Or think of the picture of God and Mantra again and again forcibly. Or pray.

15. Never miss a day in meditation. Be regular and systematic. Take Sattvic food. Fruits and milk will help mental focussing. Give up meat, fish, eggs, smoking, liquors, etc.

16. Dash cold water in the face to drive off drowsiness. Stand up for 15 minutes. Tie the tuft of hair on the head with a piece of string to a nail above. As soon as you begin to doze, the string will pull you and wake you up. It will serve the part of a mother. Or lean upon an improvised swing for 10 minutes and move yourself to and fro. Do 10 or 20 mild Kumbhakas (Pranayama). Do Sirshasana and Mayurasana. Take only milk and fruits at night. By these methods you can combat against sleep.

17. Be careful in the selection of your companions. Give up going to talkies. Talk little. Observe Mouna for two hours

daily. Do not mix with undesirable persons. Read good inspiring, religious books. (This is negative good company if you do not get positive good company). Have Satsanga. These are all auxiliaries in meditation.

18. Do not shake the body. Keep it as firm as a rock. Breathe slowly. Do not scratch the body every now and then. Have the right mental attitude as taught by your Guru.

19. When the mind is tired, do not concentrate. Give a little rest.

20. When an idea exclusively occupies the mind, it is transformed into an actual physical or mental state. Therefore if you keep the mind fully occupied with the thought of God and God alone, you will get into Nirvikalpa Samadhi very quickly. Therefore exert. Exert in right earnest.

10. Exercises in Meditation

I. Place a picture of Lord Jesus in front of you. Sit in your favourite meditative pose. Concentrate gently with open eyes on the picture till tears trickle down your cheeks. Rotate the mind on the cross on the chest, long hair, beautiful beard, round eyes, and the various other limbs of His body, and fine spiritual aura emanating from His head, and so on. Think of His interesting life and the miracles He performed and the various extraordinary powers He possessed. Then close the eyes and try to visualise the picture. Repeat the same process again and again.

II. Place a picture of Lord Hari in front of you. Sit again in your meditative posture. Concentrate gently on the picture till you shed tears. Rotate the mind on His feet, legs, yellow silk robes, golden garland set with diamonds, Kaustubha gem, etc., on the chest, earrings, then the face, the crown of the head, the disc on the right upper hand, the conch on left upper hand, the mace on the right lower hand, and the lotus flower on the left lower hand. Then close the eyes and try to visualise the picture. Repeat the same process again and again.

III. Keep a picture of Lord Krishna with flute in hands. Sit in your meditative pose and gently concentrate on the picture till you shed tears. Think of His feet adorned with anklets, yellow garment, various ornaments round His neck, the necklace set with the Kaustubha gem, the long garland of beautiful flowers of various colours, earrings, crown set with precious jewels of priceless value, dark and long hair, sparkling eyes, the Tilaka on the forehead, the magnetic aura round His head, long hands adorned with bracelets and armlets, and the flute in the hands ready to be played upon. Then close your eyes and visualise the picture. Repeat the same process again and again.

IV. This is one kind of meditation for beginners. Sit in Padmasana in your meditation room. Close your eyes. Meditate on the effulgence in the sun, or the splendour in the moon or the glory in the stars.

V. Meditate on the magnanimity of the ocean and its infinite nature. Then compare the ocean to the infinite Brahman, and the waves, foams and ice-bergs to the various names and forms. Identify yourself with the ocean. Become silent. Expand. Expand.

VI. This is another kind of meditation. Meditate on the Himalayas. Imagine that the Ganga takes its origin in the icy regions of Gangotri near Uttarakasi, flows through Rishikesh, Haridwar, Varanasi, and then enters into the Bay of Bengal near Gangasagar. Himalayas, Ganga and the sea—these three thoughts only should occupy your mind. First take your mind to the icy regions of Gangotri, then along the Ganga and finally to the sea. Rotate the mind in this manner for 10 minutes.

VII. There is a living universal Power that underlies all these names and forms. Meditate on this Power which is formless. This will terminate in the realisation of the Absolute, Nirguna, Nirakara (formless) Consciousness eventually.

VIII. Sit in Padmasana. Close your eyes. Gaze steadily on the formless air only. Concentrate on the air. Meditate on the all-pervading nature of the air. This leads to the realisation of the nameless and formless Brahman, the One living Truth.

IX. Sit in your meditative pose. Close your eyes. Imagine that there is a Supreme, Infinite Effulgence hidden behind all these names and forms, which is tantamount to the effulgence of crores of suns put together. This is another form of Nirguna meditation.

X. Concentrate and meditate on the expansive blue sky. This is another kind of Nirguna meditation. By the previous methods of concentration the mind will cease thinking of finite forms. It will slowly begin to melt in the ocean of Peace, as it is deprived of its contents. The mind will become subtler and subtler.

XI. Have the picture of OM in front of you. Concentrate gently on this picture with open eyes till tears flow profusely. Associate the ideas of eternity, infinity, immortality, etc., when you think of OM. The humming of bees, the sweet notes of the nightingale, the seven tunes in music, and all sounds are emanations from OM only. OM is the essence of the Vedas. Imagine that OM is the bow, the mind is the arrow and Brahman (God) is the target. Aim at the target with great care and just as the arrow becomes one with the target, you will become one with Brahman. The short accent of OM burns all sins, the long accent gives Moksha, and the elongated accent bestows all psychic powers (Siddhis). He who chants and meditates upon this monosyllable OM, chants and meditates upon all the Scriptures of the world.

XII. Sit in Padmasana or Siddhasana in your meditation room. Watch the flow of breath. You will hear the sound "SOHAM", 'So' during inhalation and 'Ham' during exhalation. SOHAM means 'I AM HE.' The breath is reminding you of your identity with the Supreme Soul. You are unconsciously repeating Soham 21,600 times daily at the rate of 15 Soham per minute. Associate the idea of Purity, Peace, Perfection, Love, etc., along with Soham. Negate the body while repeating the Mantra and identify yourself with the Mantra, the Atman or the Supreme Soul.

XIII. Uddhava asked Lord Krishna, "O Lotus-eyed! How to meditate on Thee? Tell me what is the nature of that meditation and what it is?" To which Lord Krishna replied, "Be seated on the Asana that is neither high nor low, with your body erect and in an easy posture. Place your hands on the lap. Fix your gaze on the tip of the nose (in order to fix the mind). Purify the tracks of Prana by Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka, and then again in the reverse way (i.e., first breathe in by the left nostril, with the right nostril closed by the tip of the thumb, then close the left nostril by the tips of the ring finger and the little finger and retain the breath in both the nostrils. Then remove the tip of the thumb and breathe out through the right nostril. Reverse the process by breathing in through the right nostril, then retaining the breath in both the nostrils and letting out the breath through the left nostril.) Practise this Pranayama gradually with your senses controlled.

" 'Aum' with the sound of a bell extends all over from Muladhara upwards. Raise the 'Aum' in the heart by means of Prana (twelve fingers high) as if it were the thread of a lotus-stalk. There let Bindu, the fifteenth vowel sound, be added to it. Thus practise Pranayama accompanied by the Pranava reciting the letter ten times. Continue the practice three times a day, and within a month you shall be able to control the vital air. The lotus of the heart has its stalk upwards and the flower downwards (and it is also closed, like the inflorescence with bracts of the banana flower). Meditate on it, however, as facing upwards and full-blown with eight petals and with pericap. On the pericap, think of the sun, the moon, and fire one after another. First meditate on all the limbs. Then let the mind withdraw the senses from their objects. Then draw the concentrated mind completely towards Me, by means of Buddhi (intellect). Then give up all other limbs and concentrate on one thing only, My smiling face. Do not meditate on anything else. Then withdraw the concentrated mind from that and fix it on the Akasa (ether). Give up that also and being fixed on Me (as Brahman) think of nothing at all. You shall see Me in Atman, as identical with all Atmans, even as light is identical with another light. The delusions about objects, knowledge and action shall then completely disappear."

This is a beautiful exercise for meditation prescribed by Lord Krishna Himself in the Bhagavata Purana.

11. The State of Meditation

Generally when you have dreamless or deep sound sleep it is either you do not remember what you dreamt of or you fall into absolute unconsciousness which is almost death—a taste of death. But there is the possibility of a sleep in which you enter into an absolute silence, immortality and peace in all parts of your being and your consciousness merges into Sat-Chit-Ananda. You can hardly call it sleep for there is perfect awareness. In that condition you can remain for a few minutes. It will give you more rest and refreshment than hours of ordinary sleep. You cannot have it by chance. It requires a long training.

When your meditation becomes deep, you generally operate through the subtle Karana Sarira (causal body) only. The Karana Sarira consciousness becomes your normal consciousness. Yogins have a normal Karana Sarira consciousness. Bhaktas like Lord Gauranga, Tukaram, Tulasidas, identified themselves with their Karana Sarira and had normal Karana Sarira consciousness. A Bhakta too becomes one with Brahman. He has divine Aisvarya yet he has a thin ethereal body. He keeps up his individuality. A whirl-pool is one with the whole mass of the water. It has a separate existence also. Similar is the case with the Bhakta who has a life with his Karana Sarira.

You will have to pass through six stages of meditation and finally you will enter into perfect Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious State. Form-perception and reflex-perception will totally vanish. There is neither meditation nor the meditated now. The meditator and the meditated have become one. You will attain now the highest knowledge, eternal and supreme peace. This is the aim of existence. This is the final beatitude of life. You are an established sage or an illumined Jivanmukta now. You are liberated while living. Hence you are called a Jivanmukta. You are absolutely free from pain, sorrow, fear, doubt and delusion. You have become identical with Brahman. The bubble has become the ocean. The river has joined the ocean, and has become the ocean. All differences and distractions will totally vanish. You will experience "I am the Immortal Self. All indeed is Brahman. There is nothing but Brahman."

In the beginning of meditation lights of various colours, such as red, white, blue, green, a mixture of red and green light, etc., appear in the forehead. They are Tanmatric lights. Every Tattva has its own hue. Prithvi Tattva has yellow colour. Apas has white colour. Agni has red colour. Vayu has green colour. Akasa has blue colour. The coloured lights are due to these Tattvas.

Sometimes a big sun or moon or lightning-like flashes appear in front of the forehead during meditation. Do not mind these appearances. Shun them. Try to dive deep into the source of these lights.

Sometimes Devatas, Rishis, Nitya Siddhas will appear in meditation. Receive them with honour. Bow to them. Get advice from them. They appear before you to help and give you encouragement.

When there is one Vritti alone, you will get Savikalpa Samadhi. When this one Vritti also dies, you will get Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In Samadhi, the Triputi (triad—knower, knowledge and knowable) vanishes. The meditator and the meditated, the thinker and the thought become one and identical. There is no meditation in Samadhi. It drops. The Dhyata (meditator) and Dhyana get merged in Dhyeya (object of meditation).

Beginners will get jerks in meditation. Jerks of head, feet, hands, arms, forearm and trunk may take place. Timid persons are unnecessarily alarmed on the score. It is nothing. Meditation brings on changes in the cells of brain, nerves, etc. Old cells are replaced by new vigorous cells. They are filled with Sattva. New groups, new channels for Sattvic thought-currents, new avenues are formed in the brain and mind. The muscles are therefore agitated a bit. Be courageous and bold. Courage is an important virtue and qualification for aspirants. Cultivate this positive quality.

For a few days probably there will be no change perceptible. You will still feel and show irritability. Go on practising every morning. Presently, as you say an irritable thing, the thought will flash into your mind, unbidden, "I should have been patient." Still go on with your practice. Soon the thought of patience will arise with the irritable impulse and the outer manifestation will be checked. Still go on practising. The irritability has disappeared and patience has become your normal attitude towards annoyance. In this manner you can develop various virtues of sympathy, self-restraint, purity, humility, benevolence, nobility, generosity, etc.

Only a trained mind which utterly controls the body can inquire and meditate endlessly. So long as life remains, never for a moment lose sight of the object of your search and contemplation (Brahman), never for a moment allow it to be obscured by any terrestrial temptation.

During the inhalation the air comes out 16 digits. When the mind gets concentrated it will become less and less. It will come to 15, then 14, 13, 12, 10, 8 and so on. When you enter into very deep, silent meditation, breath will not come out of the nostrils.

There may be occasional slow movement of the lungs and the abdomen. From the nature of the breathing you can infer the degree of concentration of an aspirant. Watch the breath very carefully.

When you advance in the spiritual practice it will be very difficult for you to do meditation and office-work at the same time because the mind will undergo double strain. It works in different grooves and channels with different Samskaras during meditation. It finds it very difficult to adjust to different kinds of uncongenial activities. As soon as it comes down from the meditation it gropes in darkness. It gets bewildered and puzzled. It has to work in different grooves and channels. When you again sit for meditation in the evening you will have to struggle hard to wipe out the newly acquired Samskaras you have gathered during the course of the day and get a calm one-pointedness of mind. This struggle brings in sometimes headache. The Prana (energy) which moves inward in different grooves and channels and which is subtle during the meditation has to move in new, different channels during worldly activities. It becomes very gross during work.

When the mind becomes steady in meditation the eye-balls become steady. A Yogi whose mind is calm will have a steady eye. There will be no winking at all. The eyes will be lustrous, red or pure white.

The purifying process leads to a deeper insight into Truth. This is the action of Grace of the Lord upon the soul in meditation. In this inflowing Grace there forthwith arises that light of the mind into which God is sending a ray of His unclouded Splendour. This Light is vastly potent.

When the Sushumna Nadi is working, i.e., when the breath flows through both the nostrils, meditation goes on with ease and joy. The mind then is calm. There is an increase of Sattvaguna when Sushumna is operating. Sit for meditation the moment the Sushumna begins to flow.

Considerable changes take place in the mind, brain and the nervous system by the practice of meditation. New nerve-currents, new vibrations, new avenues, new grooves, new cells and new channels are formed. The whole mind and the nervous system are remodelled. You will develop a new heart, a new mind, new sensations, new feelings, new modes of thinking and a new view of the universe (as God in manifestation).

The meditation-room should be regarded as a temple of God. Talks of profane nature should never be indulged in the room. No vicious thoughts of rancorous jealousy, avarice are to be entertained there. Admittance should ever be sought in it with a pious and reverent mind. For, what we do, what we think and we speak of, leave their impressions in the room and if no care is taken to avoid them, they will exert their influence on the aspirant's mind and rendering his mind perverse and restive, make him incapable of attending to the devotion. The words uttered, the thoughts cherished, the deeds done are not lost, they are always reflected on the subtle layers of ether encircling the room where they are done and affect the mind invariably. As much as possible, efforts should be made to overcome them. This is to be done for a few months only. When the habit is changed, everything will be all right.

When the mind is Sattvic, you can get glimpses or flashes of intuition. You will compose poems. You will understand the significance of the Upanishads beautifully. But this stage will not last long in neophytes. Tamas and Rajas will try to enter the mental factory. In the beginning the stage of progress may be like the frog's, never steady and continuous. You may think that you have almost reached the goal, and experience for the next 15 or 20 days nothing but disappointment. It will be a jump from position to position, but not a continuous development. Have sustained, intense Vairagya and do intense protracted Sadhana. Be under the direct guidance and in close contact with your Guru for some years. You will have steady and continuous progress.

When you experience bliss in meditation, some peculiar sensation will disturb you and with this disturbance the sublime bliss will disappear. During meditation Sattva increases, but Rajas is ever trying to overcome Sattva. You feel the peculiar sensation of disturbance on account of entry of Rajas. The thought of any work that you will have to do may also cause disturbing sensation. Forget all works and speak to the mind. "I have nothing more to do. I have done everything." When Sattva increases through inquiry, vigorous Sadhana and greater Vairagya, this disturbance will vanish and you will experience deep meditation. The bliss also will last for a long time.

Siddhas, Devas and others surrounded Uddalaka Muni. Celestial-ladies flocked to him in great numbers. Devendra offered to the Muni his Devaloka. Uddalaka totally declined to accept anything. The ladies tried to entice him by their vile charms. They told him, "Take your seat in the celestial car. It will take thee to Devaloka. Here are the springs that confer

Immortality. Here are the celestial nymphs to serve thee. Thy rare Tapas has brought all these for thee. Here is Chintamani." Uddalaka, the brave, resisted all temptations and shone in effulgence. He did not long for sensual objects. After six months the Muni awoke from his Samadhi. He would spend in one sitting, days and months and even years in deep Samadhi, and then would wake up. Bali was statue-like in Samadhi for a long period. Janaka remained statue-like in Samadhi for a long time. Prahlada seated himself statue-like in Nirvikalpa Samadhi for many years.

12. Practice of Samyama

The three—Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi—together constitute Samyama. Samyama is the name given to the combined practice of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi at one and the same time. By Samyama on external objects the Yogi gets various Siddhis and hidden knowledge of the universe of Tanmatras, etc. By concentration on Indriyas, Ahankara, mind, etc., he gets various powers and experiences.

These three (Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) are more internal than the preceding Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara. These three constitute the Yoga proper. The five accessories are the external means of Yoga. These three directly bring Samadhi. The other five purify the body, Prana and Indriyas. Hence these three are called Antaranga Sadhana.

By the conquest of Samyama comes the stage of cognition. As Samyama becomes firmer and firmer, so does the knowledge of Samadhi become more and more lucid. This is the fruit of the practice of Samyama. Samyama should become very natural. Then the knowledge flashes like anything. Samyama is a powerful weapon for the Yogi. Just as the archer aims at the gross objects at first and then takes to subtle objects he does great deal of practice and ascends the Yogic ladder rung by rung.

By Samyama on the sun comes the knowledge of the worlds. By Samyama on the moon, comes the knowledge of the region of stars. By Samyama on the Pole Star, comes the knowledge of the movements of the starts. By Samyama on the strength of elephants and others, comes their strength.

By Samyama on the signs (of others), comes the knowledge of their minds. By Samyama on the relation of the ear and ether, comes the divine hearing. By Samyama on the relation between ether and body, to the Yogi attaining the lightness of cotton, comes the power of passage through ether (air).

By Samyama and direct perception of the Samskaras (impressions of mind), comes the knowledge of the previous birth. By Samyama on the distinctive relation between Sattva (purity) and Purusha (the soul), comes the power of omnipotence and omniscience. By Samyama on the Chakra (plexus) of navel, comes the knowledge of the body.

By Samyama on the Chakra at the pit of the throat, comes the removal of hunger and thirst. By Samyama on the light of the head, comes the Darshan of Siddhas.

13. Prasnottari on Meditation

Q: What is Brahma-Muhurta?

A: 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. is termed as Brahma-Muhurta.

Q: Why is it eulogised by Rishis?

A: Because it is favourable for meditation on God or Brahman. Hence it is called Brahma-Muhurta.

Q: What are the advantages gained by Sadhakas by meditating at this particular hour?

A: At this particular hour the mind is very calm and serene. It is free from worldly thoughts, worries and anxieties. The mind is like a blank sheet of paper and comparatively free from worldly Samskaras. It can be very easily moulded at this time before worldly distractions enter the mind. Further the atmosphere also is charged with more Sattva at this particular time. There is no bustle and noise outside.

Q: Should I take bath before starting meditation?

A: If you are strong enough, if you are hale and hearty, if the weather and season can permit, if you are in the prime of youth, take a bath either in cold, lukewarm or hot water as desired. Otherwise, wash your hands, feet and face with cold water. Do Achamanam (sipping water with Mantra '*Om Achyutaya Namah, Om Anantaya Namah, Om Govindaya Namah.*')

Q: How to take to meditation or concentrate the mind for Ekagrata?

A: First concentrate on the figure of Lord Hari with four hands for one year. Then take to abstract meditation, or meditation on an idea. You can meditate on these: "*Om Ekam, Akhanda, Chidakasa, Sarva-Bhuta-Antaratma*—one indivisible Atman, the Indweller of the creatures, all-pervading subtle consciousness like ether."

Q: My greatest difficulty is about concentration of the mind. The mind almost always runs away during my meditation. What is the remedy?

A: Strengthen your Vairagya and Abhyasa. Again and again you will have to bring the mind to the Lakshya. If you can make it run 50 times instead of 55 times, that is great achievement for you. Mouna (vow of silence) will help you a lot. In winter you have your sittings in meditation in the morning, afternoon, evening and at night.

Q: What can I do besides Pranayama to elevate the mind when it gets dull during meditation? May I use counter-suggestions?

A: Whenever the mind gets dull, assert: "I am Atman. I am full of knowledge. I am Jnana-Svarupa. I am Omnipotent—OM OM OM." The mind will be elevated and fixed in your meditation.

Q: A Yogi told me while meditating on God, that he could hear the sound of Sri Krishna's flute and the Sankha-Nada. Is it true? If so, how to hear it?

A: It is quite true. Concentrate upon Krishna's picture. You will hear those two kinds of sound. Close the ears with the two thumbs or a ball of yellow beeswax beaten with cotton and concentrate deeply on the sounds you hear from the right ear. You will hear those sounds. Practise this at night.

Q: I would pray to you to give me some more instructions, some methods of Dhyana and some hints for getting along the right path.

A: Visualise every part of Sri Krishna's body with His ornaments, silk Pitambara, flute, etc., with closed eyes. Keep the image steady. If the mind runs and if you cannot bring it back to the point, allow it to roam about for a while. It will settle down by itself after jumping hither and thither for some time.

Q: Why should we devote time for meditation? God is not desirous of our prayers.

A: The goal of life is Self-realisation or God-consciousness. All our miseries, birth, old age and death, can end only by realisation of God. Realisation can be had through meditation on God. There is no other way, my dear Rama. Therefore one should practise meditation. God prompts us to do prayers, Japa, etc., because He is the Preraka (He who inspires our minds).

Q: Can I get help from God during meditation?

A: Yes. The indwelling presence that shines in your heart is awaiting with outstretched hands to embrace the sincere devotee.

Q: Is it advisable to do meditation after meals at night? A Grihastha is so much disturbed in the evening that he scarcely gets time to meditate.

A: Meditation at night, a second sitting, is absolutely necessary. If you have sufficient time at night, you can meditate even for a few minutes, say 10 or 15, before going to bed. By so doing the spiritual Samskaras will increase. The spiritual Samskaras are valuable assets or priceless treasures for you. Further you will have no bad dreams at night. The Divine thoughts will be carried during sleep. The good impressions will be there.

Q: What is the difference between Japa and meditation?

A: Japa is the silent repetition of the Name of the Lord. Meditation is the constant flow of one idea of God. When you repeat 'Om Namo Narayanaya' it is Japa of Vishnu Mantra. When you think of conch, discus, mace and lotus-flower in the hands of Vishnu, His earrings, crown on His head, His yellow silk Pitambara, etc., it is meditation. When you think of the attributes of God such as Omniscience, Omnipotence, etc., it is also meditation.

Q: Give me practical instructions as to how to meditate.

A: Sit in Padma or Siddha Asana in a solitary room, keep the head, neck and trunk in one straight line. Close your eyes. Imagine that a big effulgent sun is shining in the chambers of your heart. Place the picture of Lord Vishnu in the centre of a lotus flower. Locate the picture now in the centre of the blazing sun. Repeat His Mantra "Om Namo Narayanaya" mentally and see His image in your heart mentally from foot to head, His weapons in the hands, etc. Shut off all other worldly ideas.

Q: When I meditate, my head becomes heavy. How to remove this?

A: Apply Amalaka oil to the head and take cold bath. Dash some cold water on the head before you sit for meditation. You will be all right. Do not wrestle with the mind.

Q: Is seclusion necessary?

A: Absolutely necessary. It is indispensable.

Q: How long should I remain in seclusion?

A: For full three years.

Q: Can you suggest me some solitary place for meditation?

A: Rishikesh, Haridwar, Nasik, Uttarkasi, Badrinarayan, Kankhal (near Haridwar), Brindavan, Mathura, Ayodhya, or Kashmir.

Q: How shall I prepare myself for contemplative life?

A: Divide your property between your sons. Keep something for yourself to keep the life going. Distribute a portion in charity. Build a Kutir in Rishikesh and live there. Do not write letters to your sons. Do not enter into plains. Then start meditation. Your mind will rest in peace now. Do this at once. You must hurry up.

Q: When I was living in Uttarkasi I had good Nishtha, exalted Vrittis and good Dharana. I have lost them now when I entered the plains even though I do Sadhana. Why? How to raise myself as before?

A: Contact with the worldly-minded people at once affects the mind. Vikshepa comes in. Mind imitates. Bad, luxurious habits are developed. Bad environments and bad associations play a tremendous part and produce bad influence in the mind of Sadhakas. Old Samskaras are revived. I will ask you to run at once to Uttarkasi back again. Do not delay even a single minute. As the mind is formed out of the subtlest part of the food, it gets attached to that man from whom it receives its food. Do not be under obligation to anybody. Lead an independent life. Rely on your own self.

CHAPTER FIVE

KINDS OF MEDITATION

1. Selection for Meditation

There are different kinds of meditation. A particular kind is best suited to a particular mind. The kind of meditation varies according to taste, temperament, capacity and type of mind of the individual. A devotee meditates on his tutelary deity or Ishta Devata. A Raja Yogi meditates on the special Purusha or Isvara who is not touched by the afflictions, desires and Karmas. A Hatha Yogi meditates on the Chakras and their presiding deities. A Jnani meditates on his Self or Atman. You will have to find out yourself the kind of meditation that is suitable for you. If you are not able to do this, you will have to consult a teacher or preceptor who has attained Self-realisation. He will be able to know the nature of your mind and the correct method of meditation for you.

The mind assumes the form of the object it cognises. Then only perception is possible. A Bhakta constantly meditates on the form of his tutelary deity or Ishta Devata. The mind is always takes the form of the Deity. When he is established in his meditation, when he attains the stage of Para Bhakti or supreme devotion, he sees his Ishta Devata only everywhere. Then names and forms vanish. A devotee of Lord Krishna sees Lord Krishna only everywhere and experiences the state described in the Gita "*Vaasudevah Sarvam Iti*—Everything is Vaasudeva (Krishna) only." A Jnani or a Vedanti sees his own Self or Atman everywhere. The world of names and forms vanishes from his view. He experiences the utterances of the seers of the Upanishads: "*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*—all indeed is Brahman."

Meditation is of two main kinds, viz., Saguna (concrete) meditation and Nirguna (abstract) meditation. In concrete meditation the Yogic student concentrates on the form of the Lord Krishna, Rama, Siva, Hari, Gayatri or Sri Devi. In abstract meditation he concentrates the whole energy of the mind on one idea of God or Atman and avoids comparisons of memories and all other ideas. The one idea fills the whole mind.

When you see the concrete figure of Lord Krishna with open eyes and meditate, it is the concrete form of meditation. When you reflect over the image of Lord Krishna by closing your eyes, it is also concrete form of meditation but it is more abstract. When you meditate on the infinite, abstract light it is still more abstract meditation. The former two types belong to Saguna form of meditation, the latter to Nirguna form. Even in Nirguna meditation there is a concrete form in the beginning for fixing the mind. Later on, this form vanishes and the meditator and the meditated become one.

Saguna meditation is meditation on a Murty or form of the Lord. This is a concrete form of meditation for people of devotional temperament. This is meditation with Gunas or attributes of God. Repeat the name of the Lord or pure OM. Think of His attributes, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, etc. Your mind will be filled with purity. Enthrone the Lord in the lotus of your heart amidst a blazing light. Mentally think of His feet, legs, chest, head, hands and the ornaments and dress and again come to His feet. Again and again repeat this process.

Imagine that there is a fine garden with lovely flowers. In one corner there are beautiful cabbage-roses. In the second corner there is the "lady of the night." In the third corner there are Champaka flowers and in the fourth, jasmine. First meditate on jasmine. Then take the mind to the rose. Then to the "lady of the night" and finally to the Champaka. Again rotate the mind as above. Do this again and again for 15 minutes. Gross meditation like this will prepare the mind to finer abstract meditation on subtle ideas.

Have the figure 'OM' in front of you. Concentrate on this. Do Trataka also with open eyes (steady gazing without winking, till tears flow profusely). This is both Saguna and Nirguna meditation (with and without attributes). Keep a picture of OM in your meditation-room. You can do Puja for this symbol of Brahman. Burn incense, etc., and offer flowers. This suits the modern educated persons.

This is abstract meditation on Nirguna Brahman. Repeat OM mentally with Bhava (feeling). Associate the ideas of Sat-Chit-Ananda, Purity, Perfection, "All-Joy I am," "All Bliss I am."

There is no world. There is neither body nor mind. There is only one Chaitanya (pure consciousness). I am that pure Consciousness. This is Nirguna meditation (without attributes).

Meditation on Mahavakyas is tantamount to meditation on OM. You can take up either "*Aham Brahma Asmi*—I am Brahman" or "*Tat Tvam Asi*—That thou art." These are the Mahavakyas or the great sentences of the Upanishads. Meditate on their significance. Deny or negate or throw out the Koshas and identify with the one essence that lies behind them.

Meditate. Purify your mind. Practise concentration in a solitary room. Then squeeze out the Upanishads and the Gita from your heart. Do not depend upon imperfect commentaries. If you are sincere, you will understand the real Sankalpas (thoughts) of the Rishis of the Upanishads and Lord Krishna, what they really meant when they uttered those wise Slokas (verses) in scriptures.

Unfold the Divinity that is lurking in your heart by concentration and meditation. Do not waste your time. Do not waste your life. Meditate. Meditate. Do not lose even a single minute. Meditation will remove all the miseries of life. That is the only way. Meditation is the enemy of the mind. It brings about Manonasa or the annihilation of the mind.

Meditation is of two kinds, viz., concrete and abstract. If you meditate on any picture of a concrete object, it is concrete meditation. If you meditate on an abstract idea, or any quality (such as mercy, tolerance), it is abstract meditation. A beginner should practise concrete meditation. For some, abstract meditation is more easy than concrete meditation.

The aspirant can take up the practice of meditation after he is well up in Pratyahara (abstraction of Indriyas) and concentration. If the Indriyas are turbulent, if the mind cannot be fixed on one point, no meditation is possible even within hundreds of years. One should go stage by stage and step by step. The mind should be withdrawn again and again to the point when it runs. One should reduce his wants and renounce all sorts of wild, vain desires of the mind. A desireless man only can sit quiet and practise meditation. Sattvic, light diet and Brahmacharya are the prerequisites for the practice of meditation.

Consciousness is of two kinds, viz., focussing consciousness and marginal consciousness. When you concentrate on Trikuti, the space midway between the two eyebrows, your focussing consciousness is on the Trikuti. When some flies sit on your left hand during meditation, you drive them with your right hand. When you become conscious of the flies, it is called marginal consciousness.

A seed which has remained in fire for a second will not undoubtedly sprout into leaves even though sown in a fertile soil. Even so, a mind that does meditation for some time but runs towards sensual objects on account of unsteadiness will not bring in the full fruits of Yoga.

2. Meditation in Different Paths

Meditation is of two kinds, viz., concrete meditation and abstract meditation. Meditation follows concentration.

The Samadhi becomes Sahaja or natural through long practice of Nididhyasana and not through Pranayama or any Hatha Yogic practice.

A Raja Yogi enters into the meditative mood deliberately by practising Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara and Dharana. A Bhakta enters into the meditative mood by cultivating pure love for God. A Vedantin or a Jnana Yogi enters into the meditative mood by acquiring the four means, hearing the Srutis and reflecting on what he has heard. A Hatha Yogi enters into the meditative mood by practising deep and constant Pranayama.

Meditate on the form of Lord Hari with four hands, or Lord Krishna with flute in hand or Lord Rama with bow and arrow in hands. This is concrete or gross meditation (Sthula Dhyana). Meditate on silence or peace or Santi. This is abstract or subtle meditation (Sukshma Dhyana). Meditate: "I am an embodiment of silence or peace." This is Vedantic Nirguna Meditation or Ahamgraha Upasana. Meditate on bliss or Ananda. This is also abstract meditation. Choose any type of meditation according to your temperament, taste, capacity or disposition and reach the goal of life in this birth.

Dhyana (meditation) is of two kinds viz., Japa-Sahita Dhyana, i.e., meditation attended or associated with Japa, and Japa-Rahita Dhyana, i.e., meditation without any Japa or pure meditation only. When you repeat: "Om Namo Narayanaya" mentally or verbally, it is mere Japa. When you repeat the Mantra and at the same time you meditate on the form of Hari with conch, discus, mace, lotus, yellow cloth (Pitambara), armlets, bracelets, etc., it is Japa-Sahita Dhyana. When you progress in meditation the Japa will drop by itself. You will have meditation only. This will constitute Japa-Rahita Dhyana.

Just as the light is burning within the hurricane lamp so also the divine flame is burning from time immemorial in the lamp of your heart. Close your eyes, merge yourself within the divine flame. Plunge deep in the chambers of your heart. Meditate on this divine flame and become a flame of God.

Withdraw the Indriyas from the objects. Propitiate the Lord by your Supreme Tapas. Meditate on Lord Hari, get into the dazzling divine car and reach the supreme abode of Vishnu.

O friends, wake up, sleep no more. Meditate. It is Brahma-Muhurta now. Open the gate of the temple of the Lord in your heart with the key of love. Hear the music of the soul. Sing the song of Prema to your Beloved. Play the melody of the Infinite. Melt your mind in His contemplation. Unite with Him. Immerse yourself in the ocean of Love and Bliss.

These are the signs that indicate that you are growing in meditation and approaching God. You will have no attraction for the world. The sensual objects will no longer tempt you. You will become desireless, fearless, I-less, and mine-less. Deha-Adhyasa or attachment to the body will gradually dwindle. You will not entertain the ideas, "She is my wife," "He is my son," "This is my house." You will feel that all are the manifestations of the Lord. You will behold God in every object.

The body and mind will become light. You will always be cheerful and happy. The name of the Lord will always be on your lips. The mind will be ever fixed on the lotus-feet of the Lord. The mind will be ever producing the image of the Lord. It will be ever seeing the picture of the Lord. You will actually feel that Sattva or purity, light, bliss and knowledge are ever flowing from the Lord to you and filling up your heart.

The ultimate goal of human aspiration, according to Patanjali Maharshi, the founder of Raja Yoga Philosophy, is not union with or absorption in God, but the absolute isolation (Kaivalya) of the Soul from matter.

Make the mind calm. Steady the intellect. Still the senses. Now you will enter into deep meditation. Be vigilant. The Rajas may try to rush in. Whip the invader ruthlessly and again attain serenity.

In Yoga the vision is directed inside. The outgoing senses and the mind are restrained by the Yogi by ceaseless practice. The Yogi controls the Vrittis or the waves of the mind and eventually rests in Asamprajnata Samadhi or seedless Samadhi. He encounters great difficulties in controlling the Vrittis. The waves of the ocean are nothing when compared with the waves of the mind-ocean. The very vigilant undaunted Yogi is in the seaman or the captain of this body-steamer that is tossed about in the terrible ocean of Samsara. He stops the mental waves through ceaseless concentration of mind (Dharana) and meditation (Dhyana) and eventually reaches the other shore of fearlessness and immortality.

When you reach the spiritual summit or thoughtlessness, you will reach the abode of Immortality and eternal peace and supreme bliss. Rama! Start your homeward journey. March boldly in the spiritual path. Be not afraid of difficulties. Be bold. Ascend peak after peak. Cross the deep ravines of subtle Moha and pride that comes in your way. Take a long jump and cross the mystic frontier of war. Enter now into the infinite domain of pure bliss and highest knowledge. Regain your old pristine, divine glory. Rest in your Sat-Chit-Ananda Svarupa.

Understand and realise the nature and power of thoughts. Curb the base thoughts by entertaining sublime thoughts. Transcend the sublime thoughts also and enter into a thoughtless state. Identify yourself with pure consciousness.

Even an exceedingly sinful man, when he meditates on the immutable Atman even for a moment, becomes an ascetic of great purity.

Fire is generated in sacrifice by rubbing two pieces of wood (Arani). Even so the fire of wisdom is generated by meditation on the Supreme Self.

The mind is disciplined in the beginning by fixing it on a concrete object or symbol. When it is rendered steady and subtle, it can be fixed later, on an abstract idea such as "*Aham Brahma Asmi.*"

Meditate always: 'I am pure consciousness. I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. I am the immutable self-effulgent, immortal Self. I am the silent witness of the three states, viz., waking state, dream state, deep sleep state. I am distinct from the body, mind, Prana and the senses. I am distinct from the five sheaths.' You will attain Self-realisation. You will have knowledge of the Self (Brahma-Jnana).

A Yati (anchorite) should always meditate on the Bhava which is experienced just before sleep and at the termination of the waking state by which only he is freed and by none else. This is the only prop (Alambana) to get at the real Nissankalpa or Nirdvandva state.

A desire arises in the mind. It is gratified. Another desire arises. In the interval between two desires, there is perfect stillness of mind. The mind is free from Sankalpas and love and hate during this interval. There is perfect peace during the interval or Sandhi between two Vrittis of the mind.

When the mind is concentrated on Brahman (Supreme Self), it becomes one with Brahman like camphor with the flame or salt with water or water with milk. Mind melts in Brahman. Mind becomes of the nature of Brahman. Then there is no duality. The meditator becomes Brahman. This is the state of Kaivalya.

This microcosm and macrocosm—the three Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—are contained in OM. All the Vedas and the six Darshanas are contained in OM. OM is everything. OM is Brahman. Meditate on OM with meaning and Bhava. Know the Brahman and be free.

You will have to pass through six stages of meditation and finally you will enter into perfect Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious state. Form-perception will totally vanish. There is neither meditation nor the meditated now. The meditator and the meditated have become one. You will now attain the highest knowledge and eternal supreme peace. This is the final beatitude of life. You are an enlightened sage or the illumined Jivanmukta now. You are liberated while living. Hence you are called a Jivanmukta. You are absolutely free from pain, sorrow, fear, doubt and delusion. You have become identical with Brahman. The bubble has become the ocean. The river has joined the ocean and has become the ocean. All differences and distinctions will totally vanish. You will now experience: "I am the Immortal Self. All indeed is Brahman. There is nothing but Brahman."

Try to continue the Akhanda Brahmic feeling. Soar high. Keep that state as long as you can. Get established in That. Have Sahaja Avastha (natural Brahmic feeling) always. This must be your aim and endeavour now.

3. Preliminary Meditation

(A) MEDITATION ON A ROSE

Dharana or concentration is fixing of the mind on a concrete object or on an abstract idea. Meditation follows concentration. Meditation is an unbroken, uninterrupted or incessant flow of ideas of the object that is being concentrated upon. Concrete meditation on an object is necessary for an untrained mind in the beginning. Sit in Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana in a room set apart only for meditation and meditate on the colour, form, the various parts of rose such as petals, stalk, pollen, etc., on the various kinds of roses, as white rose, yellow rose, red rose, cabbage rose, on the various preparations as rose water, rose syrup, scents as Otto de Rose, essence of rose, confections as Gulkand, etc., of the diverse uses of rose as rose water for cleaning the eyes in ophthalmia, Gulkand as a laxative in constipation, the flowers and garlands for worship of God and for wearing, etc., on the various virtuous properties such as its cooling effect on the system, its carminative properties, the price of rose and garlands of roses, the places where they are found in abundance and various other items connected with rose. You must exclude any other foreign thought associated with other objects. By this concrete method the mind becomes fit for abstract meditation. Practise for half an hour daily in the morning at 5 a.m. for a month.

(B) MEDITATION ON A BUFFALO

Krishna Chaitanya, a Brahmachari in Omkar Ashram on the banks of the holy Narmada, went to Rama Acharya and prayed to him to teach him the method of meditation. Rama Acharya said to Krishna, "O Krishna, meditate on Lord Krishna having crossed legs and flute in hand, located in the midst of a big sun in the lotus of your heart and repeat mentally the famous Krishna Mantra: 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vaasudevaya'." Krishna Chaitanya said, "Guruji, I am quite dull-headed. I cannot do this. This is too difficult for me. The Mantra is very, very long. Kindly suggest an easy method."

Rama Acharya said, "O Krishna Chaitanya! Do not be afraid. I will tell you an easy way. Hearken. Place a beautiful, small brass idol of Sri Krishna in front of you. Sit in Padmasana. Look at this idol, hands, legs, etc., with attention. Do not look at any other object." Krishna replied, "O Guruji, this is still more difficult. Sitting with crossed legs will give severe pain in the hips and the knees. If I think of the pain I cannot look at the idol. I have to sit steadily, look with attention and mark carefully the various parts. I cannot do more than one action at a time and I cannot remember more than two things at a time. O Guruji Maharaj, kindly show me a very, very easy way."

Rama Acharya said, "O Chaitanya, place the photo of your father in front of you. Sit in front of the photo in any way you like. Simply look at the figure for a short time." Krishna Chaitanya replied, "O Guru, my protector, this is also difficult, because I am very much afraid of my father. He is a terrible man. He used to beat me severely. I tremble the very moment I think of his form. My legs quiver. This will never suit me. I should say, this method is more difficult than the previous ones. I pray, Guruji, kindly suggest a very, very simple method this time. I will surely follow."

Rama Acharya said, "O Krishna, tell me now, which thing do you like best?" Krishna replied, "O Guruji, I have tended a buffalo in my house. I have taken plenty of milk, curd and ghee from that buffalo. I like it best of all. I constantly remember this." Rama Acharya said, "Krishna, now go to this room, lock the door. Sit in a corner on a mat and constantly think and meditate on this buffalo only to the exclusion of all other objects. Do not think of anything else. Do this presently."

Now Krishna Chaitanya was very much pleased. With a gay, cheerful mind he went inside the room, followed the instructions of the Guru implicitly and began to meditate on the buffalo with one-pointed mind intensely. He did not get up from the seat for three days continuously.

He forgot all about his food. He was unconscious of his body and surroundings. He was deeply absorbed in the form of the buffalo. Rama Acharya came on the third day to the room of Krishna to see his condition and found Krishna absorbed in meditation. With a loud voice the Guru called out, "O Krishna, how do you feel? Come outside and take your food." Krishna replied, "O Guruji, I am very grateful to you. I am in deep meditation now. I cannot come out now. I am very big. Horns have grown out of my head. I cannot get out of the small door. I like the buffalo very much. I have become buffalo myself."

Rama Acharya found out that Krishna's mind had attained Ekagrata and was quite fit for attaining Samadhi. Rama Acharya said, "O Krishna, you are not a buffalo. Now change your meditation. Forget the form of the buffalo (Nama and Rupa) and meditate on the underlying essence of the buffalo, Sat-Chit-Ananda, which is your real nature." Krishna Chaitanya changed his method, adhered to Guru's instructions and attained Kaivalya Mukti, the goal of life.

The above story goes to illustrate that meditation on any object which the mind likes best, is very easy.

Patanjali Maharshi suggests various methods for meditation as: "Meditate on the Effulgent One in the Lotus of the heart who is beyond sorrow. Meditate on the heart that has given up all attachment to sense-objects. Meditate on the knowledge that comes in sleep." And lastly he has introduced the Sutra No. 39: "*Yathabhimatadhyanadva*—Meditate on anything that appeals to you as good." It will be easy to concentrate on a thing which the mind likes best.

(C) MEDITATION ON MAHATMA GANDHIJI

Retire to your meditation-room. Sit in Padmasana. Meditate on the form, stature, height, colour of Gandhiji, his education career in England, his legal practice in Africa, his political activities to raise the condition of Indians in Africa, his energetic activities in non-cooperative movement in India, his famous Charkha and Khaddar, his widespread preaching throughout India for popularising Khaddar, his strenuous efforts to unite Hindus and Muslims, his exertions to uplift the degraded position of Harijans, the untouchables, his noble ideals and laudable principles, his life of absolute renunciation, Tyaga and Sannyasa, his life of severe Tapascharya, his abstemious nature in diet, his incessant struggle in the achievement of mental

Brahmacharya, his ideals of Ahimsa and Satyam in thought, word and deed, his facile pen in journalism, his various useful publications in English, Hindi and Gujarati, his establishment of a useful Ashram which trains good Karma Yogins, his strong will and various other noble qualities. Do not allow any other thought to enter. If the mind runs, draw it and fix on the above thoughts. Practise this for half an hour daily for two months. You will learn the right technique of meditation.

(D) MEDITATION ON 12 VIRTUES

Meditate on these 12 virtues for 10 minutes daily:—

Humility in January.
Frankness (Arjava) in February.
Courage in March.
Patience in April.
Mercy (Karuna) in May.
Magnanimity in June.
Sincerity in July.
Pure love in August.
Generosity in September.
Forgiveness in October.
Balanced state in November.
Contentment in December.

Meditate also on Purity, Perseverance, Diligence, Sahasa and Utsaha. Imagine that you are in the actual possession of these virtues. Say unto yourself: "I am patient. I will not get irritated from today. I will manifest this virtue in my daily life. I am improving." Think of the advantages in possessing this virtue "Patience" and the disadvantage of irritability.

This spiritual path is rugged, thorny and precipitous. It is too long. The feet may become tired and bruised. The heart may pant. But the reward is very great. You will become immortal. Persevere, plod on diligently. Be on the alert. Be agile and nimble like the squirrel. There are resting places on the path. Hear the inner small voice. It will guide you if you are pure and sincere.

(E) MEDITATION ON DIVINE SONGS

If you are well-versed in music, go to a lonely place, sing beautifully to your heart's content. Develop the Raga and

Ragini luxuriantly from the bottom of your heart. Forget yourself. Forget the past and environments. This is an easy method. Select some fine Stotras, prayers or philosophical portions. Tukaram's Abhangas, Akhow's songs in Gujarati, Tayumana Swami's songs and Tevaram in Tamil, Brahmanandamala in Hindi, are admirably suitable for this purpose. Ram Prasad, a reputed saint of Bengal, realised in this way. Ram Prasad's songs are very famous throughout Bengal. Ravana pleased Lord Siva through his Sama Gana played with nerve-strings removed out of his body. Hear what Shakespeare says on music: "The man that hath no music in him nor is moved with concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treason, stratagem and spoils. The motions of his spirit are dull as night, his affections dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted."

You can quite easily withdraw the mind from the objects through singing. Singing immediately elevates and expands mind. To fix an expanded mind on the Saguna or Nirguna Brahman is very easy. What is wanted here is good taste and skill in music with purity of heart and steady practice of concentration.

(F) MEDITATION ON GITA SLOKAS

Learn by heart some important Slokas in Bhagavad-Gita. Repeat them mentally after sitting in the Asana.

1. There are some important Slokas which dwell on the "Immortality of the Soul" in the second chapter. You can concentrate and meditate on these series of ideas. You will find this practice very, very useful.

2. Meditate on the series of ideas from the Slokas which describe the Sthita Prajna state in the second chapter.

3. Meditate on the series of ideas from the Slokas which describe the effects of Yoga in the sixth chapter.

4. Meditate on the series of ideas from the Slokas which deal with the attributes of a Jnani in the thirteenth chapter.

5. Meditate on the series of ideas from the Slokas which describe the nature of Daivi Sampat in the sixteenth chapter.

6. Meditate on Visvarupa-Darsan idea in the eleventh chapter.

7. Meditate on the Slokas: "Devotee dear to me" in the twelfth chapter.

8. Meditate on "Gunatita" ideas in the fourteenth chapter.

I have given you 8 sets of ideas. Select any set that appeals to you most. You can allow the mind to move from one set to another.

4. Saguna Meditation

(A) MEDITATION ON ISHTA DEVATAS

This is meditation on a Murty, either Lord Krishna, Rama, Siva or Devi. This is a concrete form of meditation for people of Bhakti-Marga. This is meditation with Gunas, attributes of God. Repeat His name also. Think of His attributes, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, etc. Your mind will be filled with purity. Lord Krishna's picture with flute in hand and Lord Vishnu's picture with conch, discus, mace and lotus are excellent ones of concrete meditation. Enthrone Him in the lotus of your heart amidst blazing light. Mentally think of His lotus-feet, yellow silk robe, necklace set with Kaustubha gem, earrings, crown, bracelets, conch, discus, mace and lotus, and then again come back to His feet. Again and again repeat the process.

Saguna meditation is meditation on a form. Select any Murty you like best, either Siva, Vishnu, Rama or Krishna, according to your inclination or taste. Or follow the directions of your Guru. He will select for you the Ishta Devata or tutelary deity which will guide you. An archer first aims at grosser and bigger objects. Then takes up medium objects. Finally he shoots at finer and subtle objects. Even so, one should take to Saguna meditation to start with and when the mind is trained and disciplined well, he can have Nirakara, Nirguna meditation. Saguna meditation is meditation on a concrete object. Nirguna meditation is meditation on an abstract idea. Saguna Upasana removes Vikshepa. For three or six months, practise Trataka on any picture.

After six months' practice of Trataka, meditate on the mental picture of the Murty from half to two hours only in the Trikuti (space between the two eyebrows). See and feel that the Ishta Devata is present in every object in the universe. When you meditate, mentally repeat the Mantra of the Devata. Think of the attributes of the deity, such as omnipotence, omniscience, etc. Feel that Sattvic qualities from the deity flow towards you.

Feel that you possess this Sattvic Bhavana. You will have Darsana of your Ishta Devata in one or two years, if you are sincere in your Sadhana. Follow this plan. This will help concentration. Move the mind on the various parts of the Murty. Take for instance the picture of Lord Vishnu with four hands and meditate as follows. The practice of Trataka is of great use in this Saguna meditation.

"Dhyeyah sada savitrimandalamadhyavarti
Narayanah sarasijasanasannivishtah
Keyuravan makarakundalavan Kiriti
Hari hiranmayavapur-dhritasankhachakrah."

"Sankhachakragadapane
Dvarakanilayachyuta."

"Meditate always on Narayana seated in the Asana of lotus-flower in the midst of a lustrous sun in the lotus of heart or in Trikuti with golden armlets set with diamond, with earrings, with golden crown set with diamond, with golden necklace set with Kaustubha gem and with golden colour, with discus, conch, mace and lotus-flower in four hands—that indestructible Achyuta of Dvaraka."

During meditation, move the mind on the various parts of Vishnu. See the various parts of Vishnu. See with the mind His feet first, then legs, then His yellow silk cloth, then His golden Hara set with diamond, Kaustubha gem, etc., on the breast, then the earrings, Makara Kundalas, then the face, then the crown on the head, then the discus on the right upper hand, then the conch on the upper left hand, then the mace on the lower right hand, then the lotus-flower on the left lower hand. This is the order. Then come down to the feet and start again to the upper parts. By this method the mind will not run towards objects.

First meditate on Virat-Purusha. Then take up Saguna meditation. Lastly have Nirguna meditation.

(B) MEDITATION ON VIRAT PURUSHA

Sit in Padma or Siddha Asana in your meditation room and meditate on the following thoughts for half an hour daily. This is a gross form of meditation for six months.

1. Heaven is His head.
2. Earth is His foot.
3. Quarters are His hands.
4. Sun and moon are His eyes.
5. Fire is His mouth.
6. Dharma is His back.
7. Grass and herbs are His hairs.
8. Mountains are His bones.
9. Sea is His bladder.
10. Rivers are His arteries and veins.

The mind will expand now. Afterwards take to Saguna meditation on a form of God such as Rama, Krishna or Siva. Have this kind of meditation for a year. Then have recourse to Nirguna meditation on Brahman. By the practice of these various methods, the mind becomes a fit instrument to take up abstract meditation on an abstract idea.

(C) MEDITATION ON GAYATRI

Gayatri is the "Blessed Mother" of the Vedas. It is a symbol of God, the Lord of created beings. Japa of Gayatri Mantra produces Chitta-Suddhi without which you can do nothing, nothing in spiritual line. You can never effect an iota of spiritual progress. Gayatri is an effective universal prayer. This is also known as Brahma Gayatri.

Om Bhur Bhuvah Svah; Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi; Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat.

Om	Para Brahman
Bhur	Bhu-Loka (Physical plane)
Bhuvah	Antariksha-Loka (Astral plane)
Svah	Svarga-Loka (Celestial plane)
Tat	Brahman; Paramatman
Savitur	Isvara; Creator
Varenyam	Fit to be worshipped
Bhargo	Remover of sins and ignorance; Glory
Devasya	Of the shining one
Dhimahi	We meditate
Dhiyo	Intellects; Buddhis
Yo	Which; Who
Nah	Our
Prachodayat	Enlighten

"Let us meditate on Isvara and His Glory, Who has created this universe, Who is fit to be worshipped, Who is the remover of all sins and ignorance. May He enlighten our Buddhis (intellects)."

Retire into the meditation room after bath just before sunrise. Sit in your Asana and repeat the Mantra mentally as many times as you can, but not less than 108 times and constantly feel that you are receiving light, purity and wisdom from Gayatri. Concentrate on the meaning of the Gayatri. This is important. Have your gaze at the Trikuti, the place between the two eyebrows.

5. Nirguna Meditation

(A) MEDITATION ON IDEAS

This is meditation on Nirguna Brahman. This is Ahamgraha Upasana. This is meditation on OM. This is meditation on an abstract idea. Sit in Padmasana. Repeat OM mentally. Keep the meaning of OM always in the mind. Feel that you are the All-pervading, Infinite Light. Feel that you are the "Suddha-Sat-Chit-Ananda, Vyapaka Atman, Nitya Suddha Buddha Mukta, eternally free Brahman." Feel you are Chaitanya. Feel that you are the "Akhanda Paripurna, Ekarasa, Santa, Infinite, Eternal, Unchanging Existence." Every atom, every molecule, every nerve, vein, artery should powerfully vibrate with these ideas. Lip repetition of OM will not produce much benefit. It should be through heart, head and soul. Your whole soul should feel that you are the subtle, all-pervading Intelligence. This feeling should be kept up continuously.

Negate the body-idea when you repeat OM mentally. When you chant OM, feel:

Infinity I am OM OM OM
All Light I am OM OM OM
All Joy I am OM OM OM
All Glory I am OM OM OM
All Power I am OM OM OM
All Knowledge I am OM OM OM
All Ananda I am OM OM OM

Meditate on the above ideas constantly. Constant effort with zeal and enthusiasm is indispensable. Repeat mentally the above ideas incessantly. You will realise. You will have Atma-Darshan within two or three years.

Will and Manana are two important factors which play a conspicuous part in Nirguna meditation or Vedantic Sadhana. Manana is preceded by Sravana or hearing of Srutis and followed by Nididhyasana of a constant nature with zeal and enthusiasm. Nididhyasana is profound meditation. Sakshatkara or Aparoksha realisation follows Nididhyasana. Just as the drop of water when dropped on a hot iron is absorbed by the hot iron, so also the mind and the Abhasa Chaitanya (reflected consciousness) become absorbed in Brahman. The balance left is Chinmatra or Chaitanya Matra (Consiciousness-Absolute). Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana of the Vedantic Sadhana correspond to Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi of Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi.

By worship and meditation or Japa of Mantras, the mind is actually shaped into the form of the object of worship and is made pure for the time being through the purity of the object (namely, Ishta Devata). By continual practice (Abhyasa), the mind becomes full of the object to the exclusion of all else, steady in its purity and does not wander into impurity. So long as the mind exists it must have an object and the object of Sadhana is to present it with a pure one.

The sound repeatedly and harmoniously uttered in Japa of Mantra must create or project into perception the corresponding thing, Devata. The Mantras gather creative momentum by repetition through the force of Samskaras.

In Samadhi, the mind loses its own consciousness and becomes identified with the object of meditation (Tadakara Tadrupa). The meditator and meditated, the worshipper and worshipped, the thinker and the thought become one. The subject and the object, Aham and Idam (I and this), Drik and Drisya (seer and seen), the experiencer and the experienced become one. Prakasa and Vimarsa get blended into one. Unity, identity, homogeneity, oneness, sameness refer to Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

There are two kinds of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, viz., one in which the Jnani sees the whole world within himself as a movement of ideas, as a mode of being or a mode of his own existence, like Brahman, by resting in Brahman (Svarupa Visranti). Brahman sees the world within Himself as His own Sankalpa or

Vivarta. So does a Jnani also. This is the highest state of realisation as in the case of Lord Krishna, Lord Dattatreya, Sri Sankara, Jnanadev and others.

Sarvabhutastham atmanam
Sarvabhutani chatmani
Ikshate yogayuktatma
Sarvatra samadarsanah

"The self, harmonised by Yoga, seeth the Self abiding in all beings, all beings in the Self; everywhere he seeth the same." (Gita VI—29).

But in the case of the man who has no realisation, he sees the world as something outside, different and independent. This is due to Avidya.

In the second variety, the world vanishes from view and the Jnani rests on Suddha Nirguna Brahman, according to Rajju-Sarpa Nyaya (analogy of snake in the rope). When a Raja Yogi gives up his Savikalpa Samadhi, he meets the Jnani in Nirguna Brahman through Brahmakara Vritti.

There is a living universal Power or Intelligence that underlies at the back of all these names and forms. Meditate on this Power or Intelligence which is formless. This will form an elementary Nirguna meditation without any form. This will lead to the realisation of the Absolute, Nirguna, Nirakara consciousness eventually.

Sit in Padmasana. Concentrate on the air. This will lead to the realisation of the nameless and formless Brahman, the one living Truth.

Imagine that there is a Parama, Ananta, Akhanda Jyotis (Supreme, Infinite effulgence) hidden behind all the phenomena with an effulgence that is tantamount to the blaze of crores of suns. Meditate on that. This is also another form of Nirguna meditation.

Concentrate and meditate on the expansive sky. This is also another kind of Nirguna, Nirakara meditation. By the previous methods in concentration the mind will stop thinking of finite forms. It will slowly begin to melt in the ocean of Peace, as it is deprived of its contents, viz., forms of various sorts. It will become subtler and subtler also.

Nirguna meditation is abstract meditation on Nirguna Brahman. Repeat OM mentally with Bhava (feeling). Associate the ideas of Sat-Chit-Ananda—Purity, Perfection, "All Joy I am: All Bliss I am: I am Svarupa: *Asangoham*—I am unattached: *Kevaloham*—I am alone: *Akhanda-Eka-Rasa-Chinmatroham*."

(B) VEDANTIC MEDITATION

This is only Nirguna meditation. Meditate on the following formulae:—

I am the all OM OM OM
I am All in all OM OM OM
I am the Immortal Self in All OM OM OM
I am the living Truth OM OM OM
I am the living Reality OM OM OM
I am the Witness of the three states
  (Aham Sakshi, Avasthatraya-Sakshi) OM OM OM
I am Light of lights
  (Nirakara Jyotis-Svarupoham) OM OM OM
I am Sun of suns OM OM OM
I am Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute
  (Sat-Chit-Ananda-Svarupoham) OM OM OM

Even in Nirakara (formless) Vedantic meditation of Advaitins there will be an abstract mental image in the beginning of Sadhana. The abstract image will vanish eventually. When you meditate or assert, negate the three bodies and identify yourself with the indwelling Essence. Deny the names and forms. Do not mistake either the physical body or the mind, the Prana, the intellect or the Indriyas for the pure Eternal Atman. The highest Self is entirely distinct from these illusory vehicles or Mayaic products. Remember this point well. Meditate on the above ideas and bring the Bhava during work also. You can take up any one of the above formulae according to your taste. Bring back the mind to the point again and again if the mind wanders. You can rotate the mind from one formula to another if the mind wanders, and finally fix it on one formula only, when the mind has become steady. The mind will become now like the steady flame of a lamp in a windless place. The one formula also will drop by itself. You will rest in your own Svarupa, thoughtless state of pure bliss. Samadhi or superconscious state will ensue now. Enjoy the Atmic bliss. Rejoice in the inner Immortal Self.

(C) ASSERTIONS FOR VEDANTIC NIDIDHYASANA

I am Light of lights OM OM OM
All Purity I am OM OM OM
All Bliss I am OM OM OM
All-pervading Consciousness I am OM OM OM
Satchidananda-Svarupoham OM OM OM
Akhanda-Ekarasa-Chinmatroham OM OM OM
Bhumananda-Svarupoham OM OM OM
Aham Sakshi (I am witness) OM OM OM
Nirvisesha-Chinmatroham OM OM OM
Asangoham (I am unattached) OM OM OM

The glory of Jivanmukta, a liberated sage, is indescribable. He is Brahman himself. Eight Siddhis and nine Riddhis roll under his feet. Through Sat-Sankalpa (true resolve) he can work wonders or miracles. Glory, glory to such Jivanmuktas who are blessed souls on earth. May their blessings be upon you all!

(D) VEDANTIC CONTEMPLATION

Dive deep into the heart by withdrawing the mind from the sensual objects. Kill this illusory little "I" and know "I am He (Soham)." Just as the drop of water loses its name and form and joins the sea, so also the Jiva gets himself merged in the Supreme Soul and loses his own name and form.

If you are a very busy man and if you lead a travelling life always, you need not have a special room and a special time for meditation. Do "Soham" Japa and Dhyana along with the breath. This is very easy. Or you can associate Rama Mantra also with the breath. Then every moment of breath will become a prayer and a meditation. Remember "Soham" or "Rama." Feel His presence everywhere. This will suffice.

If the mind constantly dwells on sensual objects, the conception of the reality of the universe will surely increase. If the mind ceaselessly thinks of Atman, the world appears like a dream. Free yourself from the base thoughts of the mind, the various useless Sankalpas (imaginations). Make ceaseless enquiry of Atman. Mark the word "ceaseless." This is important. Then only there will be the dawn of spiritual knowledge.

In Vedanta or the path of Jnana, the terms "Manana" (reflection) and "Nididhyasana" are very frequently used. Manana is Vijatiya Vritti-Tiraskara (driving away all the thoughts of worldly objects), and Svajatiya-Vritti-Pravaha (increasing the thought-currents of God or Brahman like a steady stream). Nididhyasana is deep intense contemplation. It is Anatma-Vritti-Nirodha or Atmakara-Vritti-Sthiti. The mind is perfectly established in the Absolute. No worldly thought will intrude now. The contemplation is like a steady flow of oil (Tailadharavat).

In the beginning when you are a neophyte, you can close your eyes to remove the distraction of mind, as you are very weak. But later on you must meditate with eyes open, even during walking. You must keep your balance of mind at all times. Otherwise there is no hope of perfection. Be always contemplating on the non-existence of this phenomenal world. Atman only exists.

All the visible things are Maya. Maya will vanish through Jnana, or meditation on Atman. One should exert himself to get rid of Maya. Maya havocs through the mind. Destruction of the mind means the annihilation of the Maya. Meditation is the only way of conquering Maya.

It is the actions of the mind that are truly termed Karmas. True liberation results from the disenthronement of the mind. Those who have freed themselves from the fluctuation of their minds come into possession of the Supreme Nishtha (meditation). Should the mind be purged of all its impurities, then it will become very calm and all the worldly delusions attendant on its births and deaths will be soon destroyed.

If you place a big mirror in front of a dog and keep some bread in front, the dog at once barks by looking at its reflection in the mirror. It foolishly imagines that there is another dog. Even so, man sees his own reflection only, through his mind-mirror, in all the people but foolishly imagines like the dog that they are all different from him and fights on account of hatred and jealousy.

"There is no world. There is neither body nor the mind. There is only One Chaitanya (Pure Consciousness). I am that Pure Consciousness." This is Nirguna meditation (without attributes).

In Nididhyasana (meditation) you will have to develop the Svajatiya-Vritti-Pravaha. Make the thoughts of Brahman or Divine presence flow like inundation or flood. Do Vijatiya-Vritti-Tiraskara. Renounce the thoughts of objects. Drive them away with the whip of Viveka and Vichara. There is struggle in the beginning. It is trying indeed. But later on as you grow stronger and stronger and as you grow in purity and Brahma-Chintana, Sadhana becomes easy. You rejoice in the life of unity. You get strength from Atman. Inner strength grows when all the Vishaya-Vrittis are thinned out and the mind becomes one-pointed (Ekagra).

Try to identify yourself with the eternal, immortal, ever pure Atman that resides in the chambers of your heart. Think and feel always: I am the ever-pure Atman. This one thought will remove all troubles and fanciful thoughts. The mind wants to delude you. Start this anti-current of thoughts. The mind will lurk like a thief.

(E) MEDITATION ON OM

OM (Pranava) is a ferry-boat for men who have fallen into the never-ending ocean of mundane life. Many have crossed this ocean of Samsara with the help of this ferry-boat. You can also do so if you will meditate constantly on OM with Bhava and meaning and realise the Self.

OM is the only symbol for the Immortal, All-pervading Self or Atman. Think of OM to the exclusion of everything else. Shut out all mundane thoughts. They may again and again recur. Again and again generate thoughts of the pure Self. Associate ideas of purity, perfection, freedom, knowledge, immortality, eternity, infinity, etc., with OM. Repeat OM mentally.

Om is everything. Om is the name or symbol of God, Isvara or Brahman. OM is your real name. OM covers all the threefold experiences of man. OM stands for all the phenomenal worlds. From OM this sense-universe has been projected. The world exists in OM and dissolves in OM (AUM). "A" represents the physical plane, "U" represents the mental plane and astral planes, the world of spirits, all heavens, "M" represents the deep sleep state, and all that is unknown even in your wakeful state, all that is beyond the reach of the intellect. Om represents all. OM is the basis of your life, thought and intelligence.

All words which denote the objects are centred in OM. Hence the world has come from OM, rests in OM and dissolves in OM.

OM is the symbol of Brahman or the Supreme Being. Meditate on OM. When you think or meditate on OM, you will have to think of Brahman, the thing signified by the symbol.

Association with OM is to become one with the thing signified. "*Tad-japas-tadartha-bhavanam.*" Try to identify yourself with the All-blissful Self when you think or meditate or chant OM and negate the five Kosas as illusory adjuncts created by Maya. You have to take the symbol OM as Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman or Atman. This is the meaning. During meditation, you should feel that you are all purity, all light, all-pervading existence, etc. Meditate on the Self daily. Think you are different from mind and body. Feel "I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman—I am all-pervading consciousness." This is the Vedantic meditation.

Meditate on OM till you attain Samadhi. If your mind gets distracted by Rajas and Tamas, practise Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) again and again.

"Having made one's body or the lower self, the lower fire-stick, and Pranava (OM) the upper, by the friction of continued practice (Abhyasa) of meditation one should see God (Atman) hidden within." —*Svetasvatara Upanishad.*

O Rama, you are now living in the Himalayas. Be in tune with the Nature's Lord. The lofty peaks will whisper to you the secret of life eternal. The gurgling streams around you will sing the song of Omkara to you. Fix your mind in Pranava-Dhvani and enter into sublime communion easily. Nature will reveal to you her closely guarded secrets. Take lessons from her. Feel your unity or oneness with the snow-clad peaks, the glaciers, the refreshing Himalayan breeze, the rays of the sun, the blue sky, the glittering stars, etc.

May you all rest in the non-dual Brahman and taste the nectar of immortality. May you all reach the fourth state of bliss (Turiya) by analysing the experiences of the waking, dream and deep sleep states. May you all have a comprehensive understanding of Omkara or Pranava and the Amatra. May you all enter the soundless OM by transcending the sounds A, U and

M. May you all meditate on OM and attain the goal of life, the ultimate Reality, Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. May this OM guide you. May this OM be your centre, ideal and goal. May the secret and truth of Mandukya Upanishand be upon you all, OM OM OM!!

(F) MEDITATION ON "SOHAM"

"Soham" means "He I am" or "I am He", "I am Brahman." "Sah" means "He." "Aham" means "I." This is the greatest of all Mantras. This is the Mantra of Paramahamsa Sannyasins. This is an *Abheda-Bodha-Vakya* which signifies the identity of Jiva or the individual soul and Brahman, the Supreme Self. This Mantra comes in the Isavasya Upanishad: "Sohamasmi."

Soham is only OM. Delete the consonants S and H. You get OM. Soham is modified Pranava or OM. Some like 'Soham' better than 'OM.' Because they find it convenient and easy to associate it or mix it with the breath. Further there is no effort in doing Japa of this Mantra. If you simply concentrate on the breath, if you simply watch the breath, that is quite sufficient.

Meditation on 'Soham' is same as meditation on OM. Some repeat a compound Mantra "*Hamsah Soham—Soham Hamsah.*" Before you practise Soham Dhyana or meditation on "Soham" you must practise the Neti-Neti (not this, not this) doctrine. You must negate or deny the body and the other Koshas by repeating "*Naham Idam Sariram*"—"*Aham Etat Na.*" "I am not this body, mind or Prana. I am He, I am He—Soham, Soham!"

Repeat this Mantra mentally. You should feel with all your heart and soul that you are the All-pervading, Omnipotent, All-blissful Soul or Brahman. This is important. Then only the full benefits of meditation or Japa of this Mantra will be realised by you. Mere mechanical repetition will not help you much. It has its own benefits. But maximum benefits can only be realised in feeling. Feeling is Self-realisation.

If intellect tries to feel, "I am Brahman, I am Omnipotent" and the Chitta tries to feel, "I am a clerk in the chief court; I am weak; I am helpless. What shall I do for money for my daughter's marriage? I am afraid the judge will fine me," realisation is not possible. You must destroy all wrong Samskaras or impressions, all false imaginations, all weaknesses, all superstitions and all vain fears. Even if you are in the jaws of a tiger, you must powerfully roar—"Soham, Soham, Soham, I am not this body!" Then only you are a real Vedantin. Even if you have nothing to eat, even if you are in the roll of unemployment, you must say with great force and power, "Soham, Soham." You have been spoiled by the mind and by Avidya (ignorance). It is Avidya, it is mind that has brought one to this limitation through identification with this body. Pierce the veil of ignorance. Tear the five sheaths. Remove the curtain of Avidya or nescience, which is a great nuisance. Rest in your own essential Satchidananda Svarupa through the force of Meditation on `Soham' Mantra!

The Jiva or the individual soul is repeating this Mantra 21,600 times within 24 hours. Even during sleep the Soham-repetition goes on by itself. Watch the breath very carefully and you will know this. When you inhale the breath, the sound 'So' is produced. When you exhale, 'Ham' is produced. This is termed Ajapa-Mantra because this is done without moving the lips along with the breath. Repeat 'So' mentally when you inhale, 'Ham' mentally when you exhale. Practise this for two hours in the morning and evening. If you can repeat for 10 hours, it is all the more good. You must practise meditation for full 24 hours when you advance on the path. Study Hamsa Upanishad. You will find real rest during meditation. There is no necessity for sleep.

The repetition of the compound Mantra "Hamsah Soham —Soham Hamsah," creates a deeper impression. The late famous Sri Sheshadri Swami of Tiruvannamalai used to repeat this compound Mantra. When he moved alone in the streets and bazaar he repeated this Mantra. He meditated on this compound Mantra. We say 'God is Love—Love is God.' Similarly repetition of 'Hamsah Sham—Soham Hamsah,' gives more force. This intensifies the force of the Mantra. The aspirant gets more internal strength from the Atman or the Soul-force. His conviction grows stronger. This sort of repetition corresponds to the repetition of the Mahavakya, "*Aham Brahma Asmi. Brahmaivahamasmi*—I am Brahman. Brahman am I."

"*Anal Haq*" of the Sufi-Fakirs corresponds to Soham of the Paramahamsa-Sannyasins. Guru Nanak highly extols this Mantra.

Your duration of life is counted really by so many 'Soham' breaths in the light of Yoga. It is not really made up of so many years. By the practice of Pranayama, you save the Soham-breaths and thus can prolong your life.

In the beginning of your practice, simply watch the breath every now and then. Meditate for one hour in a closed room on Soham with Bhava and meaning. You can watch the breath with silent Soham-repetition while sitting, standing, eating, talking, bathing, etc. This is an easy method of concentration.

Soham is the breath of life. OM is the Soul of breath. Eliminate 'Ha' and substitute 'I.' Soham will become 'So I am.' If you concentrate on the breath you will notice that the breath is gradually becoming very, very slow when concentration becomes deep. Gradually the repetition of Soham will drop when there is deep concentration. The mind will become very calm. You will enjoy. Ultimately you will become one with the Supreme Self.

(G) MEDITATION ON MAHAVAKYAS

Mahavakyas are the sacred sentences of the Srutis. They are four in number:

1. *'Prajnanam Brahma.'*
2. *'Aham Brahma Asmi.'*
3. *'Tat Tvam Asi.'*
4. *'Ayam Atma Brahma.'*

The first is in Aitareya Upanishad of Rig-Veda. The second is in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad of Yajur-Veda. The third is in Chhandogya Upanishad of Sama Veda. And the fourth is in Mandukya Upanishad of Atharvana Veda.

The first is a Lakshana Vakya which gives a definition of Brahman and imparts Tatbodha-Jnana. The second is an Anubhava Vakya that gives Sakshi-Jnana. Third is Upadesha Vakya and bestows Siva Jnana. Guru instructs the disciple. Fourth is Sakshatkara Vakya which confers Brahma-Jnana. You can take any Mahavakya and meditate on it as you do on OM.

Meditation on Aham Brahma Asmi: Constantly feel that you are the Suddha Sat-Chit-Ananda Vyapaka Atman (Pure, Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, All-Pervading Brahman), when you repeat mentally: "*Aham Brahma Asmi.*" Lip repetition will not produce much benefit.

You must intensely feel from the subjective heart. Gradually, you will be taken to superconscious state through deep feeling.

Sit in your Asana on a fourfold blanket. Face North or East and constantly feel:

1. Infinity I am.
2. Eternity I am.
3. Immortality I am.

Meditation on Mahavakyas is tantamount to meditation on OM. You can take either '*Aham Brahma Asmi*' or '*Tat Tvam Asi*' Mahavakya, and meditate on its significance. Negate or throw out the Koshas yourself and identify with the one essence that lies behind them.

Meditate. Purify your mind. Practise concentration in a solitary room. Then squeeze out the Upanishads and the Gita from your heart. Do not depend upon imperfect commentaries. If you are sincere, you will understand the real Sankalpa of the Rishis of the Upanishads and Lord Krishna, you will know what they really meant when they uttered those wise Slokas.

Unfold the Divinity that is lurking in your heart by concentration and meditation. Do not waste your time. Do not waste your life.

(H) POSITIVE MEDITATION

1. I am the All (*Sarvatva*)
2. I am in All (*Sarvatmaka*)

Meditate on the above ideas. In this meditation, the body and the world are taken as Brahman. As expressions of Brahman they are included. It is highly preposterous to think that Brahman is by itself full of Ananda and that which is expressed out of Brahman is full of misery, pain and sorrow. Pessimism should be shunned. It is the Jiva Srishti that is at the bottom of all pain and misery. There is nothing wrong in Isvara Srishti. Isvara Srishti does not give the least pain. On the contrary, it is Kama, Krodha, idea of mine, thine, "I am the doer" etc., that cause all trouble. This is due to Ajnana which causes identification with the limited mind.

Repeat the above idea mentally at all times. Feel you are the All. Feel that your Shakti is working in all bodies. Constantly dwell on these ideas: "The whole world is my body. All bodies are mine. All lives are mine. All pains are mine. All joys are mine." Jealousy, anger, hatred, egoism all will vanish. In the Samadhi of positive meditation, the Jnani sees within himself the world as a movement of ideas. He is both Saguna and Nirguna.

(I) NEGATIVE MEDITATION

"I am not the body. I am not the mind. I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Svarupa." Meditate on the above ideas constantly. Feel you are the Sat-Chit-Ananda Svarupa always, all through twenty-four hours. Negate the body-idea. Incessant Sadhana is necessary to remove Deha-Adhyasa which is due to Anadi Samskaras (beginningless impressions). If you can go above the body-consciousness, if you can leave the body at will, three fourths of your Sadhana is over. There is a little balance only. Then, there remains only the drawing of the curtain, removal of the veil of Avidya. That can be done quite easily. Even when you move about, even when you are at work, always feel that you are all-pervading, infinite Brahman. This is important. Thinking, concentration and efforts to separate yourself from the body should go together. In negative meditation, the Jnani dwells in Suddha, Nirguna Brahman. He has no consciousness of the world.

6. Saguna and Nirguna Meditation Compared

Isa, Prasna, Katha, Tapaniya and other Upanishads elaborately treat the method of contemplation of Brahman, as devoid of qualities. Badarayana, in a chapter of Brahma-Sutras which deals with the nature of qualities of Brahman, mentions positive attributes like 'joyful,' 'intelligent,' etc., as well as negative attributes like 'measureless,' 'colourless,' etc. Both kinds of attributes are referred to the absolute and yet the contemplation of such a Brahman can be called Nirguna-Upasana or meditation on conditionless Brahman. The chief distinction between the contemplation of the conditioned (Saguna) and unconditioned (Nirguna) Brahman is that in the former the devotee looks upon it as really connected with those attributes, while in the latter, positive and negative qualities are not viewed as essentially connected with it, but as suggesting its absolute nature. Hence, joyful etc., do not enter into the essence of the contemplated Brahman but act as a gateway for grasping its true nature. In the contemplation of the conditioned Brahman, those and similar other properties form a part of the contemplation.

The term Nirguna does not mean that Brahman is a negative concept, the Brahman is a non-entity or zero. It means that the qualities found here in limitation, are found illimitable in Brahman. It means that the attributes are Brahman's essential nature or His Svarupa. It means that Brahman does not possess perishable qualities of matter like the blue colour of a cloth but possesses all auspicious qualities (Sarva-Kalyana-Gunas). Brahman is Nirguna-Guni. So also, by Nirakara, it does not mean that Brahman is formless. It means 'He has not got a limited form as that of objects, but has a form unimaginable.' What form can you attribute to infinity? Many have a crude idea of Brahman. They say "Brahman is a block of stone because He has no qualities. He is a regular void, a zero." No. No. They are entirely mistaken. They have not made Sadvichara. They have various doubts. They have a gross intellect which is unfit for philosophical investigation (Vichara), discrimination, reflection, ratiocination, etc. They have not studied the infallible Upanishads, the right means of knowledge, the right source of wisdom which gives an accurate knowledge of Brahman. Upanishads are infallible, because they appeal to the reason of every thinker, every philosopher. They tally with the experiences of realisation. Hence they are infallible. Their authority is more valid than that of perception or inference. Brahman is extremely subtle. He is finer than a thousandth part of a point of a hair divided into a thousand parts. A subtle, calm, pure, sharp-pointed, clear and one-pointed Suddha Buddhi is needed for understanding and meditating on Brahman. They suffer from Samasya-Bhavana, doubts regarding the validity of the Upanishads, and the true nature of Brahman. They should purify the mind by selfless service, should study the Upanishads, should develop the four means of qualifications, should have constant Satsanga. Then, they will have intellectual conviction and intellectual grasp of Brahman. By Sravana, by Manana and by Nididhyasana they reach Brahman. This is the royal road. So, Brahman is full of auspicious Gunas. He is a lump of luminosity. He is Prajnana-Ghana. He is a solid mass of knowledge. He is really more solid than the Himalayas. Knowledge is more heavy and more concrete than a huge block of stone.

In Saguna meditation, the devotee considers himself as entirely different from the object of worship. The worshipper makes a total, unreserved, ungrudging, self-surrender to the Lord. He respects, honours, adores the Lord and depends on Him for everything, for food, protection and his very existence. He looks always for help of any sort from the Ishta Devata. There is nothing independent for him. He is an instrument in the hands of the Lord. His hands, legs, senses, mind, Buddhi, physical body belong to the Lord. A devotee does not at all like the idea of Jnana or merging. He likes to have his separate entity as a servant and to serve, worship and love the Lord always. He does not like to become sugar as a Jnani, but like to taste sugar and eat sugar. This method of worship is one of contraction. Suppose there is a circle. You have a position in the centre. You contract yourself to a point and merge in the circumference. This is Saguna meditation. This is suitable for people of emotional temperament. Vast majority of persons are fit for this line of worship only.

In Nirguna meditation, the aspirant takes himself as Brahman. He denies and sublates the false adjuncts or fictitious environments as egoism, mind and body. He depends upon himself and upon himself alone. The aspirant asserts boldly. He reflects, reasons out, investigates, discriminates and meditates on the Self. He does not want to taste sugar but wants to become a solid mass of sugar itself. He wants merging. He likes to be identical with Brahman. This method is one of expansion of lower self. Suppose there is a circle. You have a position in the centre. You so expand by Sadhana to a very great extent that you occupy the whole circle, and envelop the circumference. This method of meditation is suitable for persons of fine intellect, bold understanding, strong and accurate reasoning and powerful will. Only a microscopic minority of persons is fit for this line of meditation.

It is comparatively easy to meditate on '*Aham Brahma Asmi*' when you are seated in a steady posture in a solitary closed room. But it is very, very difficult to keep up this idea amidst crowded surroundings, while the body moves. If you meditate for one hour and feel that you are Brahman, and if you feel for the remaining twenty-three hours that you are the body, the Sadhana cannot produce the desired result. So, at all times, you must try to keep up the idea that you are Brahman. This is very, very important.

A worldly mind needs thorough overhauling and a complete psychological transformation. Concentration and meditation bring about the construction of a new mind, with a new mode of thinking. Contemplative life is diametrically opposite to worldly life. It is an entire change altogether. Old Vishaya-Samskaras have to be thoroughly annihilated through constant and intense practices carried on with zeal for a long time and thereby new spiritual Samskaras have to be created.

7. Meditation and Action

Man consists of Atman, mind and body. The Atman has two aspects, changeless and changing. The latter is called the world and the former God. World also is nothing but God in manifestation. God in movement is the world. Not that the world does not exist, it has a relative existence.

Atman is all-pervading, all-blissful, all-powerful, all-knowing, eternally perfect and pure. It assumes these names and forms called the world (Nama Rupa Jagat) of its own free will. There is no desire, because there is no outside object. This will is called Shakti. It is Atman in action. In Nirguna Atman, the Shakti is static. In Saguna, it is dynamic. Atman has no desire, because it is perfect, and because there is nothing which is objective to the Atman. Desire implies attraction, which presupposes imperfection. It is the very negation of will which is decision for action from within. The Atman wills and the universe comes into being. The will of the Atman upholds and governs the universe. Human beings are driven hither and thither by egoism, desires and fears due to identification with the limiting adjunct of mind and body. This idea of limitation is called egoism.

The realisation of oneness in all existences, manifested and unmanifested, is the goal of human life. This unity already exists. We have forgotten it through ignorance. The removal of this veil of ignorance, the idea that we are confined within the mind and the body, is our chief effort in Sadhana. It logically follows that to realise unity, we must give up diversity. We must constantly keep up the idea that we are all-pervading, all-powerful, etc. There is no room here for desire because in unity there is no emotional attraction, but steady, persistent, calm, eternal bliss. Desire for liberation is terminological inexactitude. Liberation means attainment of the state of infinity. It already exists. It is our real nature. There can be no desire for a thing which is your very nature. All desires for progeny, wealth, happiness in this world or in the next and lastly even the desire for liberation should be completely annihilated and all actions guided by pure and disinterested will towards the goal.

This Sadhana—the constant attempt to feel that you are the all—can be practised or rather ought to be practised in the midst of intense activity. That is the central teaching of the Gita. It stands to reason also. Because God is both Saguna and Nirguna, with form and without form. Let the mind and the body work. Feel that you are above them, their controlling witness. Do not identify yourself with the Adhara (support for mind and body), even when it is employed in activity. Of course meditation in the beginning has to be resorted to. Only an exceptionally strong-willed man can dispense with it. For ordinary human beings, it is an indispensable necessity. In meditation, the Adhara is steady. So the Sadhana, the effort to feel Unity is comparatively easy. In the midst of activities, this effort is difficult. Karma Yoga is more difficult than pure Jnana Yoga. We must, however, keep up the practice at all times. That is absolutely essential, otherwise the progress is slow; because, a few hours' meditation on the idea that you are the all and identification with mind and body for a greater portion of the day, do not bring about rapid or substantial advance.

It is much better to associate the word-symbol, OM, with the idea. From time immemorial, this symbol has been used for expressing the idea of unity. So the best method is to repeat this word OM and meditate on its meaning at all times. But we must set apart some hours for meditation, pure and simple, in the morning and in the evening.

CHAPTER SIX

PHYSICAL OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

Introduction

Just as volunteers come in front and obstruct the path of those who want to enter a conference Pandal without tickets, so also the old Samskaras of enmity, hatred, lust, jealousy, fear, honour, respect, etc., assume definite forms and obstruct the path of aspirants.

An intelligent and comprehensive understanding of the various obstacles that act as stumbling blocks in the path of God-realisation is indispensable. Then alone the aspirant will find it easy to conquer them one by one. Just as the sailor sails in and out of a harbour along a dangerous coast with the help of a pilot, so also the aspirant with the help of a detailed knowledge of these obstacles, and the methods to conquer them will be able to steer clear the ocean of spirituality. Hence I have given a very lucid exposition of the various obstacles and effective methods to conquer them.

The aspirant comes across various kinds of obstacles when he practises meditation. If he has an intelligent and comprehensive understanding of the various obstacles that stand in his way to God-realisation, and the suitable methods to conquer them, he can tread the spiritual path easily and overcome the obstacles without much difficulty.

The real and serious obstacles to meditation are from within only. They do not come from outside. Train the mind properly.

Be courageous friends! You will come across various obstacles when you endeavour to control the mind and enter into deep meditation and Samadhi.

Aspirants are requested to go through these very carefully often and often when they encounter difficulties in the path.

Every aspirant will have to face various sorts of difficulties in the spiritual path. Buddha, Uddalaka and Sikhidhvaja experienced great difficulties. You need not be discouraged on this score. *Nil Desperandum*. Never despair. Failures are stepping stones to success. Muster all your strength and courage and march afresh in the path with redoubled vigour and energy. Take some rest now.

No impediment can stand before a man of fiery determination and iron will.

Perfection cannot be attained in a single birth alone. The perfected sages are the products of the sum total of virtuous actions done in several births. Lord Krishna says in the Gita, "The Yogi, labouring with assiduity, purified from sin and perfected through manifold births, reacheth the supreme Goal!" (Chap. VI-45).

1. Aimless Wandering

Some aspirants have got the habit of wandering aimlessly. They cannot stick to one place even for a week. The wandering habit must be checked. They want to see new places, new faces and want to talk with new people. A rolling stone gathers no moss. A Sadhaka should stick to one place at least for a period of twelve years (one Tapas period). If his health is delicate, he can stay for six months in one place during summer and rainy seasons and in another place for six months during winter. During winter he can stay either at Rajpur (Dehra Dun) or Rishikesh. During summer he can go to Badrinath or Uttarakashi. Sadhana suffers if one wanders constantly. Those who want to do rigorous Tapas and Sadhana must stay in one place. Too much walking produces weakness and fatigue.

2. Cessation of Sadhana

The aspirant is very enthusiastic in his Sadhana in the beginning. He is full of zeal. He takes a great deal of interest. He expects to get some results or Siddhis. When he does not get these results, he gets discouraged. He loses his interest in his Abhyasa and slackens his efforts. He gives up his Sadhana completely. He loses his faith in the efficacy of the Sadhana. Sometimes the mind gets disgusted with one particular kind of Sadhana. It wants some new kind of Sadhana. Just as mind wants some variety in food and other things, so also it wants variety in the mode of Sadhana. It rebels against monotonous practice. The aspirant should know how to coax the mind on such occasions and to extract work from it by a little relaxation of mind. The cessation of Sadhana is a grave mistake. Spiritual practices should never be given up under any circumstances. Evil thoughts will be ever waiting to enter the gates of the mental factory. If the aspirant stops his Sadhana, his mind will be Satan's workshop. Do not expect anything. Be sincere and regular in your daily routine, Tapas and meditation. The Sadhana will take care of itself.

Mind your own daily business. The fruit will come by itself. Let me repeat here the words of Lord Krishna—"Thy business is with the action (Tapas, Sadhana and meditation) only, never with its fruits; so let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached." Your efforts will be crowned with sanguine success by the Lord. It takes a long time for purification of the mind and getting a one-pointed mind. Be cool and patient. Continue your Sadhana regularly.

Be careful in the selection of your companions. Undesirable persons easily shake your faith and belief. Have full faith in your spiritual preceptor and the Sadhana which you are pursuing. Never allow your own convictions to be changed. Continue your Sadhana with zeal and enthusiasm. You will have quick spiritual progress and you will ascend the spiritual ladder step by step and reach the goal ultimately.

3. Deha-Adhyasa

When you go in seclusion for intense Tapas and meditation or when you practise intense meditation in a quiet room, do not bother much about your shaving. Let the hair grow. These mechanical thoughts such as thoughts of shaving, etc., will produce great distraction in your mind, and interfere with the continuity of Divine thoughts. Do not think much of the body, bread, clothing, etc. Think more of God or Atman.

4. Diseases

Diseases are generated in the body through sleeping in daytime, late vigils overnight, excess of sexual intercourse, moving in crowd, the checking of the urine and the excreta, the evils of unwholesome food, laborious mental work, lack of regular exercise, etc.

If the Yogic student develops some diseases on account of his failure in observing the laws of health and indiscretion, he says, "My diseases have arisen from the practice of Yoga."

Then he will discontinue his practice. This is the first obstacle of Yoga.

This body is an instrument for attaining God-realisation. If you do not possess good health, you cannot do any rigorous Yoga-practice and meditation. Therefore keep this body healthy and strong by regular exercise, practice of Asanas and Pranayamas, wholesome food, sunbath, fresh air, cold bath, etc.

Just as clouds screen and obstruct the sun, so also the cloud of sickness stands in your way. Even then you must not leave the practice of Japa, concentration and meditation. These small clouds of sickness will pass off soon. Give the suggestions to the mind, "Even this will pass away." Just as you do not leave your food even for a day, so also you should not leave your spiritual practice even for a day. The mind is ever ready to deceive you and stop you from the practice of meditation. Do not hear the voice of the mind. Hear the sweet voice of the soul.

Meditation itself is a tonic, and a panacea for all diseases. If you are seriously ailing you can do Japa and light meditation while lying on the bed.

5. Discussing Too Much

Some people in whom the reason has developed have got the habit of entering into unnecessary controversies and discussions. They have got Tarkika Buddhi. They cannot remain quiet even for a second. They will create opportunities for heated debates. Too much discussions end in enmity and hostility. Much energy is wasted in useless discussions. Intellect is a help if it is used in the right direction of Atmic Vichara. Intellect is a hindrance if it is used in unnecessary discussions. Intellect takes the aspirant to the threshold of intuition. Thus far and no further. Reason helps in inferring the existence of God and finding out suitable methods for Self-realisation. Intuition transcends reason but does not contradict reason. Intuition is direct perception of Truth. There is no reasoning here. Reasoning concerns matters of the physical place. Wherever there is 'why' and 'wherefore,' there is reasoning. In transcendental matters which are beyond the reach of reason, reason is of no use.

Intellect helps a lot in reflecting and ratiocination. But people in whom reasoning is highly developed become sceptical. Their reason becomes perverted also. They lose faith in Vedas and in the teachings of Mahatmas. They say, "We are rationalists. We cannot believe anything which does not appeal to our reason. We do not believe the Upanishads. We reject anything that does not come within the domain of reason. We have no faith in God and Sat-Gurus." These so-called rationalists are a type of atheists only. It is very difficult to convince them. They have an impure, perverted reason. Thoughts of God cannot enter their brains. They will not do any kind of spiritual Sadhana. They say, "Show us your Brahman of the Upanishads, or Isvara of the Bhaktas." Those who are of doubting nature will perish. Reason is a finite instrument. It cannot explain many mysterious problems of life. Those who are free from the so-called rationalism and scepticism can march in the path of God-realisation.

Give up arguing. Become silent. Look within. All doubts will be cleared. You will get a flash of divine knowledge. The pages of the internal book of divine knowledge will be clearly revealed to you. Practise this and feel.

Aspirants should not indulge in sundry talks and miscellaneous thoughts just to ease the mind. They should be serious. They should think and talk of God alone.

6. Environments

Uncongenial atmosphere, unfavourable environments and obstacles will help you only in carrying on the struggle more vigorously and diligently. You will evolve quickly and develop strong will-power and great power of endurance.

7. Evil Company

The effects of evil company are highly disastrous. The aspirant should shun all sorts of evil company. The mind is filled with bad ideas by contact with evil company. The little faith in God and scriptures also vanishes. A man is known by the company he keeps. Birds of same feather flock together. These are all proverbs or wise maxims. They are quite true. Just as a nursery is to be well-fenced in the beginning for protection against cows, etc., so also a neophyte should protect himself very carefully from foreign evil influences. Otherwise he is ruined totally. The company of those who speak lies, who commit adultery, theft, cheating, double-dealing, who are greedy, who indulge in idle talks, backbiting, talebearing, who have no faith in God and in the scriptures, etc., should be strictly avoided. The company of women and of those who associate with women is dangerous.

Bad surroundings, obscene pictures, obscene songs, novels that deal with love, cinemas, theatres, the sight of pairing of animals, words which give rise to bad ideas in the mind, in short anything that causes evil thoughts in the mind constitute evil company. Aspirants generally complain, "We are doing Sadhana for the last fifteen years. We have not made any solid spiritual progress." The obvious answer is that they have not totally shunned evil company. Newspapers deal with all sorts of worldly topics. Aspirants should entirely give up reading of newspapers. Reading of newspapers kindles worldly Samskaras, causes sensational excitement in the mind, makes the mind outgoing, produces an impression that the world is a solid reality and makes one forget the Truth that lies underneath these names and forms.

8. Fault-Finding

This is a detestable old habit of man. It clings to him tenaciously. The mind of the aspirant who always tries to poke his nose into the affairs of other men is always outgoing. How can he think of God when his mind is ever engaged in finding the faults of others? If you spend even a fraction of the time that you waste, in finding your own faults, you would become a great saint by this time. Why do you care for the faults of others? Improve yourself first. Reform yourself first. Purify yourself first. Wash the impurities of your own mind. He who applies himself diligently to his spiritual practices cannot find even a single second to look into the affairs of others. If the fault-finding nature dies, there will be no occasion for criticising others. Much time is wasted in backbiting, talebearing, scandal-mongering, etc. Time is most precious. We do not know when Lord Yama will take away our lives. Every second must be utilised in Divine Contemplation. Let the world have its own ways. Mind your own affairs. Clean your mental factory. That man who does not interfere with others is the most peaceful man in the world.

9. Habit of Self-Justification

This is a very dangerous habit for an aspirant. It is an old-standing habit. Self-assertion, self-sufficiency, obstinacy, dissimulating, speaking falsehood are the constant retinues or attendants of self-justification. He who has developed this can never improve himself as he will never admit his faults. He will always try his level best to justify himself in various ways. He will not hesitate to tell several lies to support his false statements. He will tell one lie to cover another lie, and he will speak lies ad infinitum. The aspirant should always admit his faults, mistakes, weaknesses, etc., then and there. Then only he can improve quickly.

10. Impulses

Impulses disturb meditation. All obscure subconscious impulses should be controlled by the intellect and the will.

Sex-impulse and ambition are two great disturbing factors in meditation. They carry on guerrilla warfare. They attack the Sadhakas again and again. They appear to be thinned out for sometime. They get revived often. They should be extirpated by great efforts, Vichara, Viveka (power of discrimination between Atman and Anatman, Self and non-Self) and Sivoham-Bhavana.

11. Impure and Immoderate Food

Aharashuddhau sattvashuddhih;
Sattvashuddhau dhruva smritih;
Smritilabhe sarvagranthinam vipramokshah
—Chhandogya Upanishad: 7-26-2.

"In pure food there is a pure nature, in a pure nature there is firm fixation of memory, in a firm memory there is release from all knots (of the heart)."

Mind is formed out of the subtlest portion of food. If the food is impure, the mind also becomes impure. This is the dictum of sages and psychologists. Food plays an important part in the evolution of mind. It has direct influence on the mind. Meat, fish, eggs, stale, unwholesome food, onions, garlic, etc., should be avoided by spiritual practitioners as they excite passion and anger. The food should be simple, bland, light, wholesome and nutritious. Liquors and narcotics should be strictly abandoned. Chillies, condiments, spiced dishes, pungent articles, hot things, things that are sour, sweetmeats, etc., must be rejected.

In the Gita you will find: "The foods that augment vitality, energy, vigour, health, joy and cheerfulness, are delicious, bland, substantial, agreeable, and dear to the pure. The passionate desire foods that are burning, and which produce pain, grief and sickness. That which is stale and flat, putrid and corrupt, leavings and also unclean, is the food dear to the dark"—(Ch. XVIII-8, 9, 10). Aspirants should not overload the stomach. Ninety per cent of diseases take their origin in immoderation in diet. People have developed a strong habit of eating more food than what is actually necessary from their very boyhood. Hindu mothers stuff the stomachs of their children with too much food. This is not the way of caressing and loving children. Overloading brings drowsiness and sleep immediately. If there is no hunger, you must not take any food. The night meals should be very light for Sadhakas. Half a seer of milk with one or two plantains is quite sufficient. Overloading is the chief factor in bringing night-pollutions. Sannyasins and aspirants should take their Bhiksha from the hands of those householders who earn their livelihood by honest means.

12. Irregularity in Sadhana

This is also a great obstacle in the path of realisation. Just as a man is regular in taking his food, so also he must be strictly regular in his Sadhana. He must get up punctually at 3.30 or 4 a.m. and start his Japa and meditation. One can get the meditative mood quite easily without effort if he does his Sadhana in fixed hours, both morning and night. In winter one can have four sittings. One should have the same pose, the same room, the same seat, the same Bhava or the same mental attitude and the same hours for meditation. Everybody should have his daily routine or Dinacharya and should strictly adhere to it at all costs. Leniency to the mind will upset the whole programme. One should meditate regularly. He should do the spiritual Sadhana untiringly with indefatigable energy, asinine patience, adamantine will and iron determination. Then Only sure success is possible. Meals should be taken at regular hours. One should go to sleep at fixed time and get up at fixed time. See how the sun is very regular in its rising and daily work!

13. Jerks

In the beginning of your practice you may get jerks of hands, legs, trunk and whole body. Sometimes the jerk is very terrible. Do not be afraid. Do not be troubled. It is nothing. It can do nothing. It is due to sudden muscular contraction from new Pranic influence or new nerve stimuli. Remember that new nerve-currents are formed now owing to the purification of Nadis from Sadhana. The jerks will pass off after some time. At times there is tremor of the body during meditation. This is due to the Prana being taken up to the brain in the process of meditation from the trunk, etc. Do not be afraid. Do not stop the meditation. You will have to pass through all these stages. When you get these, you are improving. You are progressing. Plod on and persevere. Be cheerful. Help is from within, from the Antaryamin, from the Sakshi, from Kutastha-Pratyag-Atman. These are all new sensations. During meditation, some people draw inspiration and compose beautiful poems. Record them, if you get this poetic inspiration.

14. Lack of Brahmacharya

No spiritual progress is possible without the practice of celibacy. The semen is a dynamic force. It should be converted into Ojas or spiritual energy by pure thoughts, Japa and meditation. Those who are very eager to have God-realisation should observe unbroken celibacy strictly. Householders break their vows owing to their weakness and hence do not find much advancement in spiritual path. They rise two steps in the spiritual ladder and fall down immediately to the ground by lack of celibacy. This is a sad mistake. They should sleep separately. They should be very serious. They should understand clearly the gravity of the situation. Taking a vow is a very sacred act. It must be kept up at all costs. Man only is the real culprit. He violates rules and laws. Women have got greater self-restraint than men, though Sastras say that they are eight times more passionate than men.

Remember the advantages of Brahmacharya and evils of loss of semen. Wastage of semen brings nervous weakness, exhaustion and premature death. Sexual act destroys vigour of mind, body and Indriyas and annihilates memory, understanding and intellect. This body is meant for God-realisation. It must be well utilised for higher, spiritual purpose. It is very difficult to get a human birth. Remember those Brahmachari-Saints who had earned undying reputation and glory. You can also achieve greatness if you preserve this vital energy and utilise it for divine contemplation. You are not crawling now. You have learnt to stand up and walk. You are a man. Behave like a real man. Observe the vow of Brahmacharya strictly. Let your wife also understand and realise the importance and glory of Brahmacharya. Get for her religious books for daily study. Ask her to fast on Ekadasi and to do Japa of any Mantra 21,600 times daily. Take refuge in God's name and Japa. All obstacles will be removed, and you can keep up this sacred vow.

St. Paul said, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." Lord Buddha said, "A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coal."

15. Ojas

Ojas is spiritual energy that is stored up in the brain. By sublime thoughts, meditation, Japa, worship and Pranayama the sexual energy can be transmuted into Ojas Shakti and be stored up in the brain. This energy can be utilised for divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits.

Anger and muscular energy can also be transmuted into Ojas. A man who has great deal of Ojas in his brain can turn out immense mental work. He is very intelligent. He has a magnetic aura in his face and lustrous eyes. He can influence people by speaking a few words. A short speech can produce tremendous impression on the minds of hearers. His speech is thrilling. He has an awe-inspiring personality. Sri Sankara, an Akhanda-Brahmacharin, worked wonders through his power of Ojas. He did Dig-vijaya and held controversies and heated debates in different parts of India with the learned scholars through his power of Ojas. A Yogi always directs his attention to the accumulation of this divine energy by unbroken chastity.

16. Lack of Yama and Niyama

You are not able to enter into Samadhi because you are not able to practise meditation. You are not able to do profound meditation because you are not able to fix the mind steadily or concentrate. You are not able to concentrate properly because you are not able to practise Pratyahara or the withdrawal of the senses from the objects thoroughly. You are not able to practise

Pratyahara thoroughly because you have not obtained mastery over Asana and Pranayama and you are not established in Yama and Niyama, which are the foundation of Yoga.

7. Lingual Diarrhoea

Too much talking is one of the bad habits which lessen the spiritual power. If a man talks too much he suffers from diarrhoea of the tongue. Quiet people cannot sit even for a second in the company of those loquacious or garrulous people. They will talk five hundred words per second. There is an electric talking-dynamo in their tongues. They are restless people. If you lock these people for a day in a solitary room, they will die. Much energy is wasted by too much talking. The energy that is spent in talking must be conserved and utilised for divine contemplation. The Vak-Indriya distracts the mind considerably. A talkative man cannot dream of having peace even for a short time. As aspirant should talk only a few words when necessary and that too on spiritual matters only. A talkative man is unfit for the spiritual path. Practise Mouna daily for two hours and especially during meals. On Sundays observe full Mouna for 24 hours. Do a lot of Japa and meditation during Mouna. The Mouna that is observed during meditation cannot be taken as vow of silence. Then sleep also should be taken as Mouna. Mouna should be observed by householders at such a time when there are great opportunities for talking and when visitors come to meet. Now only the impulse of speech can be checked. Ladies are very talkative. They create troubles in the house by idle talks and gossiping. They should observe Mouna particularly. You should speak measured words only. Too much talking is Rajasic nature. Great peace comes by observance of Mouna. By gradual practice, prolong the period of Mouna to three months.

18. Need for a Preceptor

> "If these Truths have been told to a high-souled one, who has supreme devotion to God and as much devotion to his Guru or preceptor as to God, then only they will shine forth, then only they will shine forth indeed."
>
> —*Svetasvataropanishand: VI-23.*

The spiritual path is thorny, rugged and precipitous. It is enveloped by darkness. The guidance of a Guru who has already trodden the path is imperatively necessary. He will be able to throw light and remove the obstacles in the path. The knowledge of the Self is revealed through Parampara and handed down from Guru to the disciple in succession. Matsyendranath taught Brahma-Vidya to Nivrittinath. Nivrittinath gave the knowledge to Jnanadev, and so on. Gaudapada initiated Govindapada into the mysteries of Kaivalyam. Govindapada instructed Sankaracharya. Sankaracharya instructed Sureshvaracharya and so on.

The spiritual path is quite different line altogether. It is not like writing a thesis for M.A. examination. The help of a teacher is necessary at every moment. Young aspirants become self-sufficient, arrogant, and self-assertive in these days. They do not care to carry out the orders of a Guru. They do not wish to have a Guru. They want independence from the very beginning. They apply in an absurd manner with a perverted intellect the 'Neti-Neti' doctrine and Bhaga-Tyaga-Lakshana in the case of Guru also and say: "*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma—Na Gurur Na Sishyah—Chidananda Rupah Sivoham Sivoham*." They think they are in the Turiya Avastha, when they do not know even the A.B.C. of spirituality of truth. This is the philosophy of Asuras or devils or Satans. They mistake licentiousness or "having their own ways and sweet will," as freedom. This is a serious, lamentable mistake. That is the reason why they do not grow. They lose the faith in the efficacy of Sadhana and in the existence of God. They wander about in a happy-go-lucky manner without any aim from Kashmir to Gangotri and from Gangotri to Rameswaram, talking some nonsense on the way, something from Vichar Sagar, something from Panchadasi, and posing as Jivanmuktas.

He who lives under the guidance of a Guru for twelve years, who carries out implicitly the orders of the Guru, who serves the Guru sincerely taking him for Para Brahman, can really improve in the spiritual path. There is no other way for spiritual progress. So long as there is world, there are spiritual teachers and spiritual books. The number of Jivanmuktas may be less in Kali Yuga than in Satya Yuga. If you cannot get an ideal Guru, you can take even a senior aspirant who has been treading the path of realisation for some years, who is straightforward and honest, who is selfless, who is free from pride, egoism, who has good character, who has knowledge of

Sastras, as your Guru. Live with him for some time. Study him carefully. If you are satisfied, take him as your preceptor and follow his instructions strictly. After you have accepted him once as your Guru, never suspect him and never find fault with him. Do not change the Guru very often. You will be bewildered. You will get different conflicting ideas. Everybody has got his own Sadhana. You will find no improvement if you change frequently your method of Sadhana. Stick to one Guru and stick to his instructions. Stick to one method. You will evolve quickly. Single-minded devotion to Guru, ideal, one kind of Sadhana and whole-hearted application are indispensable requisites for God-realisation.

Beware of pseudo-gurus. They are knocking about in abundance in these days. They will exhibit some tricks or feats to attract people. Think that those who are proud, who are roaming about to make disciples and to amass money, who talk of worldly matters, who speak untruth, who boast of themselves, who are talkative, who keep company with worldly people and women, and who are luxurious, are impostors. Do not be deceived by their sweet talks and lectures.

In this connection it will not be out of place to mention the story of a man who was in search of a Sadguru. He found out at last one Sadguru. The student asked the Guru, "O venerable Sir, give me Upadesha." The Guru asked, "What sort of Upadesha do you want?" The disciple asked, "O Beloved Master! Who is superior; disciple or Guru?" The Guru said, "Guru is superior to disciple." The disciple said, "O Beloved Guru! Make me a Guru. I like that." Such disciples are plenty in these days.

19. Overeating, etc.

Overloading the stomach, work that produces fatigue or overwork, too much talking, taking heavy food at night, too much mixing with people, are obstacles in the path of Yoga. You should not practise Yoga when you suffer from dyspepsia, sour belching, vomiting, diarrhoea or any other disease, and also when you are too much depressed or fatigued.

20. Poor Health

God-realisation is not possible without Sadhana or spiritual practice. Spiritual practice is not possible without good health. A sickly, dilapidated body stands in the way of doing

Abhyasa or discipline. The aspirant should try his level best to keep good health always by regular exercise, Asana, Pranayama, moderation in diet, walking, running in open air, regularity in his work, meals, sleep, etc. He should avoid drugging as much as possible. He must take recourse to nature-cure such as fresh air, wholesome food, cold bath and dietetic adjustment. He should always keep a cheerful attitude of mind under all conditions of life. Cheerfulness is a powerful mental tonic. There is intimate connection between body and mind. If one is cheerful, the body is also healthy. That is the reason why doctors now prescribe laughing three times daily in the treatment of diseases.

Some foolish aspirants refuse to take medicine when they are ailing seriously. They say, "It is Prarabdha. We should not go against Prarabdha. Taking medicine is against the Will of God. Body is Mithya. It is Anatman. If I take medicine it will increase Deha Adhyasa or body-idea." This is foolish philosophy. Take medicine. Do Purushartha. Leave the results to Prarabdha. This is wisdom. These foolish people unnecessarily torture the body, allow the disease to strike deep root and spoil their health. They cannot do any Sadhana. They ruin this instrument by a wrong conception of Vedanta. Vedanta says, "Have no attachment for this body. But keep it clean, strong and healthy for constant, rigid Sadhana. This body is a boat to cross to the other shore of immortality. It is a horse to take you to the destination. Feed the horse well—but give up 'mineness'." Tell me friend, which is better? To take a purgative, to take some medicine for a couple of days, to tide over difficulties in a few days and to start again Sadhana quickly or to neglect the disease, not to take any medicine, to allow the disease to assume a grave form, to suffer for a month or two by negligence, to make the disease chronic and incurable, and to allow the Sadhana to suffer for a month?

There is a class of people in India called the Rasayanas. They try to make the body strong and healthy by taking Siddha-Kalpas. They claim that this body can be made immortal. They say, "This body is an instrument for God-realisation. No realisation of God is possible without a healthy and strong body. Man makes some progress in Yoga and dies before he attains perfection. He takes another birth and then practises Yoga for some years and then dies again. In this way much time is lost in recurring births and deaths. If the body is kept strong and healthy for a long time, a man can have God-realisation in one birth alone." Therefore they prescribe Kalpas made up of nim-essence, nuxvomica, gold, arsenic, sulphur, mercury, etc. No disease can enter a body which is rendered adamantine by a course of these tonics. They begin spiritual Sadhana after making the body quite strong and healthy in the beginning.

21. So-called Friends

The so-called friends are your real enemies. You cannot find even a single, unselfish friend in this universe. Your real friend in need who attends on you sincerely is God, the Indweller of your heart. Worldly friends come to you to get money and other comforts when you are rolling in Rolls Royce, when you have got plenty of money. When you are in adverse circumstances, no one will care to look at you. Even your sons and wife will forsake you. This world is full of avarice, hypocrisy, double-dealing, flattery, untruth, cheating and selfishness. Be careful. Friends come to have idle talk with you and to waste your time. They have no idea of the value of time. They want to pull you down and make you worldly. They will say, "Friend, what are you doing? Earn money as much as possible. Live comfortably now. Eat, drink, be merry. Let us go to talkies. Today there is a good new American Hollywood production running at so and so theatre. There is beautiful American dance. Who knows about the future? Where is God? Where is heaven? There is no rebirth. There is no Mukti. It is all gup and gossip of Pandits. Enjoy now. Why do you fast? There is nothing beyond this world. Give up all Sadhana and meditation. You are wasting your time." You will get such sorts of advices from such worldly friends. Cut off all connections ruthlessly. Do not talk to any of your friends, however sincere he seems to be. Hide yourself away. Live alone at all times. Trust in that Immortal friend only who dwells in your heart. Then alone you are perfectly safe. He will give you whatever you want. Hear His sweet counsel from within with one-pointed mind and follow.

22. Social Nature

Social nature is good for doing Karma Yoga. But it is extremely bad for practising Dhyana Yoga. It drags you out. It makes your mind restless. It invites many friends who disturb you in a variety of ways.

23. Tandri-Alasya-Nidra

Tandri is half-sleepy state. Alasya is laziness. Nidra is sleep. Laya also means sleep. Alasya and Tandri are the precursors of sleep. These three are great obstacles in the path of realisation. Sleep is a powerful force of Maya. It is Nidra-Sakti.

Laya or mental inactivity is a state which is equivalent to deep sleep. This is as much a source of evil as passion. Wake up the mind in Laya.

You will be imagining that you are meditating. The mind will immediately run through the old grooves into the Mula-Ajnana for resting in the twinkling of an eye. You will be doubting: "Did I go to sleep? Or did I meditate now? I think I had a small nap, as I feel heaviness of lids and body now." Sleep is the greatest obstacle as it is very powerful. Even though a Sadhaka is very careful and vigilant, yet it overpowers him somehow or other. This is a very strong habit. It takes time and demands great strength of will to tear this old habit.

Arjuna is called Gudakesa or conqueror of sleep. Lord Sri Krishna addresses him, "O Gudakesa!" Lakshmana also had conquered sleep. Besides these two persons who had conquered sleep, we have not heard of anyone. There are people who have reduced the sleep to 2 or 3 hours. Even Yogins and Jnanins sleep for two or three hours. Sleep is a psychological phenomenon. Brain needs rest at least for a short time. Otherwise man feels drowsy and tired. He can neither work nor meditate. The sleep of a Jnani is different from the sleep of a worldly man. In a Jnani the powerful Samskaras of Brahma-Abhyasa are there. It is something akin to Brahma-Nishtha. One should be careful in reducing his sleep.

This is the way to reduce your sleep. Reduce it gradually. For the first four months go to bed at 11 p.m. and get up 4 a.m. Have sleep for five hours. For the next four months go to bed at 12 p.m. and get up at 4 a.m. Have sleep for four hours. For the next four months go to bed at 12 p.m. and get up at 3 a.m. Thus gradually reduce the hours of sleep.

Sadhakas can gain time for their Sadhana by reducing sleep. The practice of reducing sleep will be very troublesome in the beginning. When the habits are changed, it will be pleasant in the end.

Give up rice and heavy meal at night. Take light food, such as milk and fruits at night. You will be able to get up in the early morning. Sleep will not overpower you during meditation. Tamas enters and sleep supervenes an hour after you have started meditation.

Practise Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Bhujangasana, Salabhasana and Dhanurasana. Do a little Pranayama before you start meditation. You will not become sleepy during meditation.

Sometimes during the course of meditation the mind suddenly slips into its old grooves for sleeping. Aspirants think that they are meditating while they are actually sleeping. Dash cold water on the face. Stand up and sing, and do vigorous Kirtan for five or ten minutes. You can drive off sleep easily. Keep the light burning if sleep comes in.

When meditation becomes habitual, when the habit of getting up at 4 a.m. is well established, when you take light food at night, sleep will not trouble you at all during meditation. When sleep tries to overpower you, repeat the Mantra loudly for some time. Sit in Vajrasana.

Aspirants do meditation in the morning for one hour between 4 and 5 a.m. Then they are overpowered by sleep. They begin to sleep again after 5 a.m. This is a general complaint. Do 10 or 20 rounds of Pranayama at 5 a.m. Do Sirshasana for 2 minutes. Again you will be fresh for meditation. Use your common-sense always. The old habits may recur again and again. Tear it off again and again by suitable practices, by strength of will, by prayer, etc. The practice of keeping vigil on Sivaratri and Sri Krishna Janmashtami is highly commendable. The Christians also keep vigil on Christmas and New Year's nights.

During meditation, sleep overpowers the aspirant. He begins to doubt whether he was meditating or sleeping. If one is really meditating, his body will be light and his mind will be cheerful. If he is sleeping, the body will be heavy, the mind will be dull and the eye-lids will be heavy.

24. Vulgar Pleasures

Scents, soft beds, novel reading, dramas, theatres, cinemas, vulgar music, dancing, flowers, company of women, Rajasic diet, all these excite passions and cause disturbance of the mind. Too much salt, too many chillies, too many sweets cause intense thirst and disturb meditation. Too much talking, too much walking, too much working and too much mixing disturb the mind in meditation.

25. Wealth

Artha (wealth) is really Anartha (evil). To earn wealth is painful. To protect the wealth is still more painful. If wealth is reduced, it is also painful. If it is lost, it gives unbearable pain. You cannot earn and amass wealth without doing great sins. Wealth brings much anxiety. Therefore, shun wealth.

Retired officers remain on the banks of Ganga and practise Japa and meditation for several years, but they do not make any solid progress. Why? Because they utilise their big pension for themselves, and for their sons and daughters. They do not spend it in charity. They depend upon money for everything.

Let them spend all their money in charity and rely on God. Let them live on Bhiksha. They will surely have solid spiritual progress.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MENTAL OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

1. Anger

It is a gate to hell. It destroys the knowledge of Self. It is born of Rajas. It is all-consuming and all-polluting. It is the greatest enemy of peace. It is a modification of lust. Just as milk is changed into curd, so also lust or desire becomes transmuted into anger. When a man's desire is not gratified, he becomes angry. Then his mind becomes confused. He loses his memory and understanding. He perishes. A man when he is angry will talk anything he likes and do anything he likes. He commits murder. A hot word results in fighting and stabbing. He is under intoxication. He loses his senses for the time being. He does not know what he is exactly doing. He is a prey to anger. He is under the sway of anger. Anger is a form of Sakti or Devi. In Chandipatha you will find:

> *"Ya devi sarva-bhuteshu krodharupena samsthita*
> *Namas-tasyai namas-tasyai namas-tasyai namo namah."*

"I bow to that Devi who is seated in all beings in the form of anger."

Resentment, indignation, fury, wrath and irritation are all varieties of anger according to degree or intensity. If a man wants to correct another man and uses slight anger unselfishly as a force to check and improve him, then it is called 'righteous anger.' Suppose a man molests a girl and tries to outrage her, and a by-stander becomes angry towards this criminal, then it is called 'righteous indignation.' That is not bad. Only when the anger is the outcome of greed or selfish motives, it is bad. Sometimes a religious teacher has to express a little anger outwardly to correct his disciples. This is also not bad. One has to do it. But he should be cool within and hot and impetuous outside. He should not allow the anger to take deep root in his Antahkarana for a long time. It should pass off immediately like a wave in the sea.

If a man becomes irritable for trifling things very often, it is a definite sign of mental weakness. One should control irritability by developing patience, Vichara, Kshama, love, mercy and spirit of service. When anger is controlled it becomes transmuted into an energy that can move the world. It becomes changed into Ojas, just as heat or light is changed into electricity. Energy takes another form. If an aspirant has controlled anger completely, half of his Sadhana is over. Control of anger means control of lust also. All vices, evil qualities and wrong actions take their origin in anger. If anger is controlled all bad qualities die by themselves. He who has controlled anger cannot do any wrong or evil actions. He is always just. An easily irritable man is always unjust. He is swayed by impulses and emotions. Too much loss of semen is the chief cause for irritability and anger. The root cause for anger lies in egoism. Through Vichara, egoism should be removed. Then only can one control anger completely to the very root. Through development of the opposite virtues such as Kshama, love, Santi, Karuna and friendship it can be controlled to some extent. The force can be reduced. Jnana only completely fries all Samskaras. But practice of Mouna is of great help in controlling anger. It is very difficult to say when a man will be thrown into a state of fury. All of a sudden he gets a terrible fit of anger for trifling matters. When the anger assumes a grave form, it becomes difficult to control. It should be controlled when it assumes the form of a small ripple in the subconscious mind. One should watch the mind carefully, whenever there is a sign of irritability. Then it becomes very easy.

When a man is furious, he has lost all control. Anger gains strength by repetition. If it is checked, man gains strength of will gradually. An aspirant should direct all his attention towards conquest of his powerful enemy. Sattvic food, Japa, meditation, prayer, Satsanga, Vichara, service, Kirtan, Brahmacharya, Pranayama—all will pave a long way in eradicating this dire malady. A combined method should be adopted in its removal. When a man abuses, you try to keep quiet. Bear the insult. You will gain strength. Check the impulses and emotions to begin with. Whenever there is likelihood of a burst of anger during conversation or debate, stop your speech. Always try to speak sweet and soft words (Madhura and Mridu). The words must be soft and the arguments hard, but if the words are hard, it will bring discord. If you find it difficult to control anger, leave the place at once and take a brisk walk. Drink some cool water immediately. Chant OM loudly for 10 minutes. Smoking, meat-eating and drinking of liquors make the heart very irritable. Therefore they should be completely abandoned. Tobacco brings diseases of heart. It gives rise to 'tobacco-heart' which gets easily irritated.

Be careful in the selection of companions. Talk little. Mix little. Plunge yourself into spiritual Sadhana. Think that the world is a long dream; that the world is Mithya. This will prevent anger. Make Vichara: "What is abuse? What do I gain by getting angry? It is only wasting of energy and time. I am not body. The Atman is the same in all." This will completely remove anger. Anger spoils the blood. It throws various poisons into the blood.

Instances are recorded of women who have killed children by nursing them with breast milk when they were in a fit of anger. In the light of modern psychology all diseases take their origin in anger. Rheumatism, heart diseases and nervous diseases are due to anger. The whole nervous system is completely shattered by one fit of anger. It takes months before it is restored to normal equilibrium.

2. Backbiting

This is a dirty, abominable habit of petty-minded people. Almost all are victims of this dire malady. This has become an ingrained habit of narrow-hearted, mischievous people. This is a Tamo-Guna Vritti. The Lila of this world is kept up by this evil habit of man. It is Maya's strong weapon to spread restlessness throughout the world. If you see four men sitting in a group, think that some backbiting is surely going on there. If you behold that four Sadhus are talking, you can at once infer without any shadow of doubt that they are backbiting against some person or other. The Sadhu will be talking: "The food of that Kshetra is very bad. That Swamiji is a very bad man." Backbiting is more prevalent amongst the so-called Sadhus than amongst householders. Even educated Sannyasins and householders are not free from this dreadful disease. A real Sadhu who is engaged in contemplation will always be alone.

The root cause of backbiting is ignorance or jealousy. The backbiter wants to pull down or destroy the man who is in a prosperous condition by false vilification, slander, calumny, false accusation, etc. There is no other work for a backbiter except scandal-mongering. He lives on backbiting. He takes pleasure in backbiting and mischief-making. This is his Svabhava. Backbiters are a menace to society. They are worst criminals. They need capital punishment. Double-dealing, crookedness, diplomacy, chicanery, quibbling, tricks and artifices are the retinues of backbiting. A backbiter can never have a calm, peaceful mind. His mind is always planning or scheming in wrong directions. An aspirant should be absolutely free from this dreadful vice. He should walk alone, live alone, eat alone and meditate alone. If a man who has not removed jealousy, backbiting, hatred, pride, selfishness says, "I am meditating for six hours daily," it is all nonsense. There is no hope of getting a meditative mood even for six minutes unless a man removes all these evil Vrittis and purifies his mind first by selfless service for six years.

3. Depression

Very often depression comes in meditation in neophytes owing to the effect of previous Samskaras, influence of astral entities, evil spirits, bad company, cloudy days, bad stomach (indigestion) and loaded bowels. Treat the cause. Remove the cause. Do not allow depression to overpower you. Immediately take a brisk long walk. Run in the open air. Sing divine songs. Chant OM loudly for one hour. Walk along the seaside or river-side. Play on the harmonium if you know the art. Have cheerful thoughts and good laughing. If necessary you can take purgative and a dose of carminative mixture.

Do some Kumbhakas and Sitali Pranayama. Drink a small cup of orange juice or hot tea or coffee. Read some of the elevating portions of Avadhoota Gita and the Upanishads.

When depression comes and troubles you, the mind will revolt. The Indriyas will pull your legs. The undercurrent Vasanas will gush to the surface of the mind and torment you. Sensuous thoughts will agitate the mind and try to overwhelm you. Be bold. Stand adamant. Face these passing shocks. Keep your mind cool. Do not identify yourself with these obstacles. Increase your period of Japa and meditation. Strengthen Vairagya and discrimination too. Pray fervently. Live on milk and fruits. All these obstacles will pass away like a rent cloud. With the removal of all troubles you will shine gloriously. The improvement will be known to you. There will be a change in the mind, in speech and in all actions.

4. Doubt (Samsaya)

An aspirant begins to doubt whether God exists or not, whether he will succeed in his God-realisation or not, whether he is doing his practices rightly or not. Lack of faith is a dangerous obstacle in the spiritual path. The student slackens his efforts when these doubts crop up. Maya is very powerful. Mysterious is Maya. It misleads people through doubting and forgetfulness. Mind is Maya. Mind deludes people through doubting. Sometimes he gives up his Sadhana altogether. This is a serious mistake. Whenever doubt tries to overpower any student he should at once take recourse to the company of Mahatmas and remain with them for some time under the influence of their currents. He should clear his doubts by conversing with them. Generally an aspirant starts his Sadhana with expectation of so many Siddhis within a short time. When he does not get them he gets dejected and stops his practices. This is the trouble in almost all cases. He thinks that Kundalini will be awakened within six months and he will have clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading, flying in the air, etc. He entertains so many fantastic and queer ideas.

There are various kinds of impurities in the mind. It takes a long time for purification of the mind and getting a one-pointed mind. Concentration is a question of practice for several lives. Concentration is the most difficult thing in the world. One should not get dejected after some practice for some months or one or two years. Even if you do a little practice, the effect is there. Nothing is lost. That is the immutable law of nature. You will not be able to detect the little improvement that has come out of a little practice as you have no subtle and pure intellect. You must develop virtues: Vairagya, patience and perseverance to a maximum degree; you must have an unshakable conviction in the existence of God and in the efficacy of spiritual practices. You must have a strong determination: "I will realise God right now in this very birth, nay in this very second. I will realise or die."

Doubts are of three kinds, viz., Samsaya Bhavana, Asambhavana and Vipareeta Bhavana (wrong feeling that the Self is the body and the world is a solid reality). Sravana (hearing of the scriptures), will remove Samsaya Bhavana. Manana (meditation) will remove Asambhavana. Nididhyasana (profound meditation) and Sakshatkara (realisation) will remove Vipareeta Bhavana.

Doubt or uncertainty is a great obstacle in the path of Self-realisation. It bars the spiritual progress. This must be removed by Satsanga, study of religious books, Vichara and reasoning. It will again and again raise its head to mislead the aspirant. It should be killed beyond resurrection by certainty of conviction and firm, unshakable faith based on reasoning.

Doubt is your great enemy. Doubt causes restlessness of mind. Destroy all doubts through Vichara and Jnana.

Do not bother about the doubts. There is no end for doubts. Purify your hearts. Go on vigorously with the purification processes, such as Japa, meditation. Meditate regularly. The doubts will be cleared by themselves in a mysterious manner. The great teacher or Inner Ruler is with you. He will illumine you and remove your doubts.

5. Dreams

Various sorts of fantastic dreams trouble some aspirants very much. Sometimes there is a mixture of meditation and dreams. As the phenomenon of dreams is very peculiar and inexplicable, it is very difficult to control dreams unless you wipe out all the Samskaras in the Karana Sarira (causal body) and control all thoughts. As you grow in purity, Viveka and concentration, dreams will decrease.

The presence of dreams denotes that you are not yet well-established in deep meditation, that you have not removed Vikshepa (tossing of the mind) and that you have not done constant intense Sadhana.

6. Evil Thoughts

Suppose the evil thoughts stay in your mind for twelve hours and recur every third day. If you can make them stay for ten hours and recur once in a week by daily practice of concentration and meditation, that is a decided improvement. If you continue your practice, the period of stay and recurrence will be gradually lessened. Eventually they will disappear altogether. Compare your present state with that of last year. You will be able to find out your progress. The progress will be very slow in the beginning. It will be difficult for you to gauge your growth and progress.

Your mind will sometimes shudder when evil thoughts enter your mind. This is a sign of your spiritual progress. You are growing spiritually. You will be much tormented when you think of your evil actions committed in the past. This is also a sign of your spiritual upheaval. You will not repeat now the same actions. Your mind will tremble. Your body will quiver whenever a wrong Samskara of some evil action urges you to do the same act through force of habit. Continue your meditation with full vigour and earnestness. All memories of evil actions, all evil thoughts, all evil promptings of Satan will die by themselves. You will be established in perfect purity and peace.

An aspirant complains, "As I continue my meditation, layer after layer of impurities is rising from the subconscious mind. Sometimes they are so strong and formidable that I am bewildered as to how to check them. I am not perfectly established in truth and Brahmacharya. The old habits of speaking lies and lust are still lurking in my mind. Lust is troubling me vigorously. The very idea of women agitates the mind. My mind is so sensitive that I am not able to hear or think of them. As soon as the thought comes in the mind, all the hidden Samskaras of lust rise up. As soon as these ideas come in my mind, the meditation as also the peace of the whole day is spoiled. I advise my mind, coax it, frighten it, but it is of no avail. My mind revolts. I do not know how to control this passion. Irritability, egoism, anger, greed, hatred, attachment, etc., are still lurking in me. As far as I have analysed the mind, lust is my chief enemy and it is very strong one, too. I request you to be kind enough to advise me as to how to get rid of the same."

In the beginning all sorts of evil thoughts will arise in your mind as soon as you sit for meditation. Why does this happen during meditation, when you attempt to entertain pure thoughts? Aspirants leave their spiritual practice of meditation on account of this. If you try to drive a monkey, it attempts to pounce upon you with vengeance. Even so, the old evil Samskaras and old evil thoughts try to attack you with vengeance and with redoubled force only at the time when you try to raise good, divine thoughts. Your enemy endeavours to resist you vehemently when you try to eject him out of your house. There is law of resistance in nature. The old evil thoughts assert and say, "O man! do not be cruel. You have allowed us to stay in your mental factory from time immemorial. We have every right to abide here. We have helped you up to this time in all your evil actions. Why do you want to oust us from our dwelling place? We will not vacate our abode." Do not be discouraged. Go on with your practice of meditation regularly. These evil thoughts will be thinned out.

Eventually they will all perish. Positive always overcomes the negative. This is the law of nature. Negative evil thoughts cannot stand before positive good thoughts. Courage overcomes fear. Patience overcomes anger and irritability. Love overcomes hatred. Purity overcomes lust. The very fact that you feel uneasy now when an evil thought comes to the surface of the mind during meditation, indicates that you are growing in spirituality. In those days you consciously harboured all sorts of evil thoughts. You welcomed and nourished them. Persist in your spiritual practices. Be tenacious and diligent. You are bound to succeed. Even a dull type of aspirant will notice a marvellous change in him if he keeps up the practice of Japa and meditation for 2 or 3 years in continuous stream. Now he cannot leave the practice. Even if he stops his practice of meditation for a day, he will actually feel that he has lost something on that day. His mind will be quite uneasy.

Passion is lurking in you. You may ask me the reason why you become frequently angry. Anger is nothing but the modification of passion. When the passion is not gratified, it assumes the form of anger. The real cause for anger is ungratified passion. It expresses itself in the form of anger when you deal with the mistakes of your servants. This is an indirect cause or external stimulus for its expression. Raga-Dvesha currents are not thoroughly eradicated. They are only attenuated or thinned out to some extent. The Indriyas or senses are yet turbulent. They are subjugated to a small degree. There are still undercurrents of Vasanas and Trishnas. The outgoing tendencies of the senses are not totally checked. You are not established in Pratyahara. The Vrittis are still powerful. There is no strong and sustained discrimination or dispassion. The aspiration for the Divine has not become intense. Rajas and Tamas are still doing havoc. There is only a small increase in the quantity of Sattva. Evil Vrittis are not thinned out. They are still powerful.

Positive virtues have not been cultivated to a considerable degree. That is the reason why you have not attained perfect concentration. Purify the mind first. Concentration will come by itself.

Worldly thoughts will trouble you a lot in the beginning of your meditation. If you are regular in meditation, these thoughts will gradually die by themselves. Meditation is a fire to burn these thoughts. Do not try to drive all worldly thoughts. Entertain thoughts concerning the object of meditation.

Watch your mind always very carefully. Be vigilant. Be on the alert. Do not allow waves of irritability, jealousy, anger, hatred and lust to rise from the mind. These dark waves are enemies of meditation, peace and wisdom. Suppress them immediately by entertaining sublime and divine thoughts. Evil thoughts that have arisen may be destroyed by originating good thoughts and maintaining them by repeating any Mantra or the name of the Lord, by thinking on any form of the Lord, by practice of Pranayama, by singing the name of the Lord, by doing good action and thinking of the misery that arises from evil thoughts. When you attain the state of purity, no evil thoughts will arise in your mind. Just as it is easy to check the intruder or enemy at the gate, so also it is easy to overcome an evil thought as soon as it arises. Nip it in the bud. Do not allow it to strike deep root.

In the beginning of your practice of thought-control, you will experience great difficulty. You will have to wage war with them. They will try their level best for their own existence. They will say, "we have every right to remain in this palace of mind. We have a sole monopoly from time immemorial to occupy this area. Why should we vacate our dominion now? We will fight for our birthright till the end." They will pounce upon you with great ferocity. When you sit for meditation only, all sorts of evil thoughts will crop up. As you attempt to suppress, they want to attack you with redoubled force and vigour. But positive always overcomes the negative. Just as darkness cannot stand before the sun, just as the leopard cannot stand before the lion, so also all these dark, negative thoughts, these invisible intruders, enemies of peace, cannot stand before the sublime thoughts. They must die by themselves.

When you are very busy in your daily work, you may not harbour any impure thoughts; but when you take rest and leave the mind blank, the impure thoughts will try to enter insidiously. You must be careful when the mind is relaxed.

7. False Tushti

The Sadhaka gets some experience during the course of his Sadhana, sees wonderful visions of Rishis, Mahatmas, astral entities of various descriptions, etc. He hears various melodious Anahata sounds (Nada). He smells Divya Gandha. He gets the powers of thought-reading, foretelling, etc. The Sadhaka now foolishly imagines that he has reached the highest goal and stops his further Sadhana. This is a serious mistake. He gets false Tushti or contentment. These are all auspicious signs that manifest on account of a little purity and concentration. These are all encouragements which God gives as a sort of incentive for further progress and intense Sadhana. The aspirant gets more strength of conviction by having these experiences.

8. Fear

This is a very great obstacle in the path of God-realisation. A timid aspirant is absolutely unfit for the spiritual path. He cannot dream of Self-realisation even in one thousand births. One must risk the life if he wants immortality. The spiritual wealth cannot be gained without self-sacrifice, self-abnegation. A fearless dacoit who has no Deha-Adhyasa is fit for God-realisation. Only his current will have to be changed. Fear is an imaginary non-entity. It assumes solid forms and troubles the aspirant in various ways. If one conquers fear, he is on the road to success. He has almost reached the goal. Tantrika Sadhana makes the student fearless. There is one great advantage in this line. He has to make practices in the burial ground, by sitting over the dead body at midnight. This kind of Sadhana emboldens the student. Fear assumes various forms. There are fear of death, fear of disease, scorpion-phobia, fear of solitude, fear of company, fear of losing something and fear of public criticism in the form of "what will people say of me?"

Some are not afraid of tigers in the forests. Some are not afraid of gunshots in the battlefield. But they are awfully afraid of public criticism. Fear of public criticism stands in the way of the aspirant in his spiritual progress. He should stick to his own principles, and own convictions, even though he is persecuted and even though he is at the point of being blown up at the mouth of a machine-gun. Then only he will grow and realise. All aspirants suffer from this dire malady, fear. Fear of all sorts should be totally eradicated by Atma-Chintana, Vichara, devotion and cultivation of the opposite quality, courage. Positive overcomes negative. Courage overpowers fear and timidity.

It took me many years to understand thoroughly the secret subtle workings of the mind. Mind havocs through the power of imagination. Imaginary fears of various sorts, exaggeration, concoction, mental dramatisation, building castles in the air, are all due to the power of imagination. Even a perfect, healthy man has some imaginary disease or other due to the power of imagination of the mind. A man may have a little weakness or Dosha (fault). When he becomes your enemy, you at once exaggerate and magnify his weakness and Dosha. You even superimpose or concoct many more weaknesses and Doshas. This is due to the power of imagination. Much energy is wasted on account of imaginary fears.

9. Fickleness

Fickleness of mind is a great obstacle in meditation. Light Sattvic diet and the practice of Pranayama will remove this state of mind. Do not overload the stomach. Walk briskly in your compound hither and thither for half an hour. As soon as you have made a firm resolve, you must carry it out promptly at any cost. This will remove fickleness of mind and develop your will-power.

10. Five Hindrances to Meditation

The five hindrances to meditation, viz., sense-desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, flurry and worry, and perplexity should be removed. For, when these are not removed, meditation cannot arise. The mind that lusts after many things through sense-desire, is not concentrated on one object or being overcome by sense-desire, it does not enter in meditation in order to put away the sensuous element. The mind that is harassed by ill-will concerning an object does not leave it at once. The mind that is overcome by sloth and torpor is unwieldy. Obsessed by worry and flurry, it does not repose but flirts about. Struck by perplexity, it does not go on the path that leads to the attainment of meditation and Samadhi.

11. Force of Old Samskaras

When the aspirant does intense Sadhana to obliterate the old Samskaras, they try to rebound upon him with vengeance and with redoubled force. They take forms and come before him as stumbling blocks. The old Samskaras of hatred, enmity, jealousy, feelings of shame, respect, honour, fear, etc., assume grave forms. Samskaras are not imaginary non-entities. They turn into actualities when opportunities crop up. The aspirant should not be discouraged. They will lose their force after some time and die by themselves. Just as the dying wick burns with intensity before it gets extinguished, so also those old Samskaras show their teeth and force before they are eradicated. The aspirant should not get unnecessarily alarmed. He will have to increase the force or momentum of spiritual Samskaras by doing Japa, Dhyana, Svadhyaya, virtuous actions, Satsanga and cultivation of Sattvic virtues. These new spiritual Samskaras will neutralise the old vicious Samskaras. He should be intent on his Sadhana. He should plunge himself into his spiritual practices. This is his Kartavya or duty.

When you again sit for meditation in evening, you will have to struggle hard to wipe out the new worldly Samskaras that you have gathered during the course of the day and get a calm one-pointed mind again. This struggle brings in headache. The Prana which moves inwards in different grooves and channels and which is subtle during meditation has to move in new and different channels during worldly activities. It becomes very gross during work. During meditation, the Prana is taken up to the head.

12. Gloom and Despair

Just as clouds screen and obstruct the sun, so also the cloud of gloom and despair will stand in your way of practice. Even then you must not leave the practice of Japa, concentration and meditation. These small clouds of gloom and despair will pass off soon. Give the suggestion to the mind: "EVEN THIS WILL PASS AWAY."

13. Greed

First comes Kama. Then comes anger. Then comes greed. Then comes Moha. Kama is very powerful. So prominence is given to it. There is intimate connection between Kama and Krodha. Similarly there is close relationship between greed and Moha. A greedy man has got great Moha for his money. His mind is always on the money-box and the bunch of keys he has tied on his waist-cord. Money is his very blood and life. He lives to collect money. He is a gatekeeper only for his money. The enjoyer is his prodigal son. Money-lenders are the favourite tools of our friend, greed. He has taken his stronghold in their minds. They are the Shylocks of the present day. They suck the blood of poor people by taking enormous interest (25 per cent, 50 per cent and even 100 per cent at times). Cruel-hearted people! They pretend to show that they are of charitable disposition by doing acts such as opening of Kshetras, building temples, etc.

Such acts cannot neutralise their abominable sins and merciless acts. Many poor families are ruined by these people. They do not think that the bungalows and palaces in which they live are built out of the blood of these poor people. Greed had destroyed their intellect and made them absolutely blind. They have eyes but they see not. Greed always makes the mind restless. A man of one lakh of rupees plans to get ten lakhs. A millionaire schemes to become a multimillionaire. Greed is insatiable. There is no end to it. Greed assumes various subtle forms. A man thirsts for name and fame and applause. This is greed. A sub-judge thirsts for becoming a High Court Judge. A third-class magistrate thirsts for becoming a first-class magistrate with full powers. This is also greed. A Sadhu thirsts for getting psychic Siddhis. This is another form of greed. A Sadhu thirsts for opening several Ashrams in different centres. This is also greed. A greedy man is absolutely unfit for the spiritual path. Destroy greed of all sorts by Vichara, devotion, meditation, Japa, Dhyana, Santosha, integrity, honesty, disinterestedness and enjoy peace.

14. Hatred

This is the deadliest foe of an aspirant. It is an inveterate enemy. It is an old-standing associate of the Jiva. Ghrina, contempt, prejudice, sneering, taunting, teasing, ridiculing, mocking, frowning and showing wry faces are all forms of hatred. Hatred bubbles out again and again. It is insatiable like lust or greed. It may temporarily subside for some time, and may again burst out with redoubled force. If the father dislikes a man, his sons and daughters also begin to hate that man without any rhyme or reason whatsoever, although that man has not done them any wrong or injustice. Such is the force of hatred. If any one even remembers the figure of a man who has done him some serious injury some forty years ago, at once hatred creeps into his mind and his face shows clear signs of enmity and hatred.

Hatred develops repetition of hatred-Vritti. Hatred ceases not by hatred but by love only. Hatred needs prolonged and intense treatment as its branches ramify in various directions in the subconscious mind. It lurks in different corners. Constant selfless service combined with meditation for a period of twelve years is necessary. An Englishman hates an Irishman and an Irishman hates an Englishman. A Catholic hates a Protestant and a Protestant hates a Catholic. This is religious hatred. There is communal hatred. One man hates another man at first sight without any reason. This is Svabhavika. Pure love is unknown in this world amongst worldly people. Selfishness, jealousy, greed and lust are retinues of hatred. In Kali Yuga the force of hatred is augmented.

A son hates his father and sues him in the court. The wife divorces her husband. This has come to stay even in India. In course of time divorce courts also will be established in India. Where is the Pativrata-Dharma of Hindu ladies? Has it disappeared from the soil of India? In India marriage is a sacrament. It is a sacred act. It is not a regular contract as in the West. The husband holds the hand of his wife, both look at Arundhati star and take a solemn pledge before the holy fire. The husband says, "I shall be as chaste as Rama and promise to live with you peacefully, procreating healthy intelligent offspring. I shall love you till I die. I will never look the face of another lady. I will be true to you. I shall never separate myself from you." The wife in return says, "I shall be unto you like Radha unto Krishna, like Sita unto Rama. I shall serve thee till the end of my life in sincerity. Thou art my very life—Thou art my Prana-Vallabha—I shall realise God by serving thee as God." Look at the horrible state of present-day affairs. Absolute freedom should not be given to Hindu ladies. Manu says, "Hindu ladies should always be kept under control." This deplorable state of affairs is due to so-called modern civilisation and modern education.

Pativrata-Dharma has gone. Ladies have become independent. They forsake their husbands and do whatever they like. Culture does not consist in husband and wife walking on Mount Road and Marina Beach, holding their hands or placing their hands on the shoulders. This is not real freedom. This is vile imitation. This is unbecoming of Hindu ladies. This fashionable habit will unsex the Hindu ladies and destroy the feminine grace and modesty which are their characteristics and which adorn them.

Pure unselfish love should be cultivated. One should have fear of God. Solomon says, "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Service with Atma-Bhava can remove hatred completely and bring in Advaitic realisation of oneness of life. Ghrina, prejudice, contempt, etc., will completely vanish by selfless service. Vedanta in daily life when put into actual practice can eradicate all sorts of hatred. There is one Self hidden in all beings. Then why do you frown at others? Why do you treat others with contempt? Why do you divide and separate? Realise the unity of life and consciousness. Feel Atman everywhere. Rejoice and radiate love and peace everywhere.

15. Impatience

When you sit in Asana for meditation, you want to get up soon not on account of pain in the legs but on account of impatience. Conquer this undesirable negative quality by developing patience gradually. Then you will be able to sit for three or four hours at a stretch.

The aspirant who wants to attain Samadhi should have patience like that of the bird Tittibha which tried to empty the ocean with its beak. Once he makes a firm resolve, gods will come to his help in the same way as Garuda came to the help of Tittibha. Help invariably comes from all beings in a righteous act. Even the monkeys and squirrels helped Rama to rescue Sita. He who is endowed with self-control, courage, prowess, fortitude, patience, perseverance, strength and skill, can achieve anything. You should never give up your attempt even if you face insurmountable difficulties.

16. Independent Nature

Some do meditation for some years independently. Later on they actually feel the necessity of a Guru. They come across some obstacles in the way. They do not know how to proceed further and how to obviate these impediments or stumbling blocks. Then they begin to search for a master. A stranger in a big city finds it difficult to go back to his residence in a small avenue even in broad daylight, though he has walked half a dozen times. When difficulty arises even in the case of finding out the way in streets and roads, what to speak of the difficulties in the razor-path of spirituality when one walks alone with closed eyes!

Do not allow the mind to move in old ruts, grooves and avenues. When it falls down during meditation, elevate it at once. Generate new divine vibrations and thought-waves. Pray. Repeat the Gita-Slokas!

Energy is wasted in useless thinking. Conserve the mental energy by driving useless, obnoxious thoughts. Then you will improve in your meditation.

Just as water when it leaks into the rat-holes instead of running into the proper channels in agricultural fields becomes wasted and does not help the growth of plants, fruit-bearing trees, grain, etc., so also the efforts of an aspirant in meditation become a wastage if he has not the virtue—Vairagya. He gets no progress in meditation.

If the mind constantly dwells on sensual objects, the conception of the reality of the universe will surely increase. If the mind ceaselessly thinks of Atman (Absolute), the world appears like a dream.

17. Jealousy

This is also a great obstacle. Even Sadhus who have renounced everything, who live with one Koupeen only in the caves of Gangotri and Uttarkasi in the Himalayas are not free from this evil Vritti. Sadhus are more jealous than the householders. Their hearts burn when they see some other Sadhu in a flourishing condition, when they notice that the neighbouring Sadhu is respected and honoured by the public. They try to vilify the neighbour and adopt methods for his destruction or elimination. What a sad sight! What a deplorable spectacle! Horrible to think! Dreadful to imagine! When the hearts burn, how can you expect peace of mind? Even highly educated people are very mean and petty-minded. Jealousy is the worst enemy of Peace and Jnana. It is the strongest weapon of Maya. Aspirants should always be on the alert. They should not become slaves of name and fame and jealousy. If there is jealousy, he is a small, little being only. He is far from God. One should rejoice at the welfare of others. One should develop Mudita (complacency) when he sees others in prosperous condition. He should feel Atma-Bhava in all beings. Jealousy assumes various forms such as Irshya, Asuya, Matsarya, etc. All forms of jealousy must be totally eradicated. Just as milk bubbles out again and again during the process of ebullition, so also jealousy bursts out again and again. It must be entirely rooted out.

18. Lower Nature

I. The petty, obstinate egoism which actuates the human personality is a serious obstacle in meditation or the path of Self-realisation. This little self-arrogating principle supports its surface-thoughts and dominates its habitual ways of feeling, character and action. This is Rajasic and Tamasic egoism which conceals or covers the higher, divine, Sattvic nature. It veils the self-luminous, Immortal Soul or Atman.

You may have aspiration for the Truth. You may be endowed with devotion. You may possess a will to overcome the obstacles and hostile forces. If the little ego asserts or persists, if the external personality has not consented to change or transformation, you cannot have rapid progress in the spiritual path. It will have its own ways and inclinations.

The lower nature must be thoroughly regenerated. The habitual lower personality of the Sadhaka must be entirely changed. If this is not done, any spiritual experience or power is of no value. If this little ego or human personality persists in retaining its petty, limited, selfish, ignoble, false and stupid human consciousness, any amount of Tapas or Sadhana will bear no fruit. This means that you do not really thirst for God-realisation. It is nothing more than idle curiosity. The aspirant says to the preceptor, "I want to practise Yoga; I want to enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi; I want to sit at your feet," but he does not want to change his lower nature and old habits. He wants to have his own ways and old habits, old character, behaviour and conduct.

If the aspirant or Yogic student declines to change his petty, lower nature or if he refuses even to admit the need for any change of his lower, habitual personality, he can never make even an iota of real spiritual advancement. Any partial or temporary elevation, slight occasional aspiration during some exalted moments, any momentary spiritual opening within, without any true or radical transformation of the lower nature or habitual little personality, is of no practical value.

This change of the lower nature is not easy. The force of habit is ever strong and inveterate. It demands great strength of will. The aspirant often feels helpless against the force of old habits. He will have to develop his Sattva and will to a considerable degree by regular Japa, Kirtan, meditation, untiring selfless service, Satsanga. He must introspect and find out his own defects and weaknesses. He must live under the guidance of his Guru. The Guru finds out his defects and points out suitable ways to eradicate them.

II. If the lower nature or old personality becomes obstinate, self-assertive, and if it is supported and justified by the lower mind and will, then the matter becomes very serious. He becomes incorrigible, turbulent, unruly, arrogant and impertinent. He breaks all the rules and disciplines.

Such an aspirant clings to his old self. He has not surrendered himself either to the Lord or to a personal Guru. He is ever ready to revolt against any man for little things. He will never obey. He is not willing to receive any spiritual instruction. He is self-willed, self-satisfied and self-sufficient. He is not ready to accept his weaknesses and defects. He thinks that he is a flawless man of great achievements. He leads a happy-go-lucky life.

The old personality asserts itself with the past forms of lower nature. He asserts and follows his own crude and egoistic ideas, desires, fancies, at convenience. He claims the right to follow his own human, unregenerate, Asuric, or diabolical nature with all untruthfulness, ignorance, selfishness, rudeness, and to express all impure stuff in speech, action and behaviour.

He argues vehemently and defends himself in a variety of ways and paints in special colours. He tries to continue his past habitual ways of thinking, speaking and feeling.

He professes one thing and practises another thing. He tries to force his wrong views and opinions on others. If others are not willing to accept his wrong views, he is ready to fight against them. He at once stands up in revolt. He asserts that his views only are correct and that those who try to oppose his views are unjust, unreasonable and uneducated. He tries to persuade and convince others that his views are very reasonable and that his ways of actions are the right ways of actions for all and that his ways and views are in full accordance with the science of Yoga. Marvellous people they are! Really the world is not in need of such wonderful people in abundance!!

If he is really frank with himself and straightforward to his Guru, if he really desires to improve himself, he will begin to realise his folly and defects and recognise the source and nature of the resistance. He will soon be on the direct road to correct and change himself. But he prefers to conceal his old Asuric nature, his old diabolical thoughts under some justification or excuse or other shelter.

III. The self-assertive, arrogant Sadhaka tries to make a figure in society. He wants to maintain a position and prestige in the society. He poses himself that he is a great Yogi and possesses several Yogic powers. He claims the part of a superior Sadhaka or an advanced Yogi with great knowledge and experience or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. These defects of vanity, arrogance and Rajasic utterances are present in most persons on a smaller scale.

He is unwilling to obey the orders of his Guru and to respect elders and superiors. He is ever ready to break discipline. He has got his own ideas and impulses. The habit of disobedience and disregard of discipline is ingrained in him. He sometimes promises that he will be obedient to his Guru and elders, but the action done is frequently the very opposite of his promise. Non-observance of discipline is indeed a serious obstacle to the Sadhaka. He sets the worst possible example to others.

He who is disobedient, who breaks the discipline, who is not straightforward to his Guru, who cannot open his heart to his preceptor or spiritual guide, cannot be benefited by the help of Guru. He remains stuck in his own self-created mire or mud and cannot progress in the divine path. What a great pity! His lot is highly lamentable indeed!!

He practises dissimulation. He plays the hypocrite. He pretends falsely. He exaggerates things. He makes a false use of his imagination. He conceals his thoughts and facts. He does distortion and denies any concealment of facts. He denies positively certain facts. He tells terrible, deliberate lies. He does this to cover up his disobedience or wrong course of action to keep up his position and to have his own ways or indulge in his old habits and desires.

He himself does not know what he is exactly doing as his intellect is clouded by impurity. He does not know what he means and does not mean what he says.

He never admits his faults and defects. Even if anyone points out his defects for correcting him, he feels extremely annoyed. He wages war against him. He has more brute in him.

He has got the most dangerous habit of self-justification. He always tries to justify himself, to stick to his ideas, to maintain his own position or course of action by bringing any kind of foolish, inconsistent arguments, clever tricks or devices. He misuses his intellect to support his own foolish actions. These defects are common in some in a lesser, in others in a greater degree.

IV. If he feels even a little bit for his present deplorable condition, if he attempts to show even a slight improvement, if there is a little receptive attitude, he can be corrected. He can have progress in the path of Yoga. If he is obstinate and pig-headed, if he is absolutely self-willed, if he deliberately shuts his eyes or hardens his heart against the Truth or Divine light, no one can help him.

The aspirant should give his full consent with all his being (Sarva Bhava) for the change of his lower nature into divine nature. He must make total, unreserved, ungrudging self-surrender to the Lord or Guru. He must have the true spirit and right abiding attitude. He must make the right persistent endeavours. Then only the real change will come. Mere nodding the head, mere professing, mere saying 'yes' will not serve any purpose. It will not make you a Superman or Yogi.

Yoga can be practised only by those who are very earnest about it and who are ready to annihilate their little ego and its demands. There is no half-measure in the spiritual path. Rigid discipline of senses and mind, rigorous Tapas and constant meditation are necessary for the attainment of God-realisation. The hostile forces are ever ready to overwhelm you if you are not vigilant, if you give the least sanction or the smallest opening to them. Yoga cannot be practised if you cling to your old little self, old habits, old unregenerate self-assertive lower nature.

You cannot lead a double life at the same time. Pure divine life, life of Yoga, cannot co-exist with mundane life of passion and ignorance. Divine life cannot conform to your own little standards. You must rise above petty human level. You must raise yourself to a higher level of divine consciousness. You cannot claim freedom for your petty mind and little ego if you want to become a Yogi. You should not affirm your own thoughts, judgment, desires and impulses. The lower nature with its retinue, viz., arrogance, ignorance and turbulence stands in the way of descent of the divine light.

Become a true, sincere aspirant in the path of Yoga. Kill this lower nature by developing the higher divine nature. Soar high. Get yourself ready for the descent of the divine light. Purify and become a dynamic Yogi.

May the blessings of great Yogins be upon you all!

19. Manorajya

Manorajya is building castles in the air. This is a trick of the mind. Look at this wonder! The aspirant is meditating in an isolated cave in the Himalayas. He plans in the cave: "After finishing my meditation, I must move about in San Francisco and New York and deliver lectures there. I must start a centre of spiritual activity in Columbia. I must do something new to the world. I must do something which none has done up to this time." This is ambition. This is egoistic imagination. This is a great obstacle. This is a powerful Vighna. This will not allow the mind to rest even for a second. Again and again there will be resurrection of some scheme, speculation or plan or other. The aspirant will be thinking that he is having deep meditation, but if he closely watches his mind through introspection and self-analysis, it will be a pure case of building castles in the air. One Manorajya will subside and another will crop up in the twinkling of an eye. It will be a small Sankalpa or ripple in the mind-lake. But it will gain tremendous force within a few minutes by repeated thinking. The power of imagination is tremendous. Maya havocs through the power of imagination. Imagination fattens the mind. Imagination is like musk or Siddha-Makaradhvaja. It renovates and vivifies a dying mind. The power of imagination will not allow the mind to keep quiet even for a second. Just as swarms of locusts or flies come forth in a continuous stream, so also currents of Manorajya will stream forth incessantly. Vichara, discrimination, prayer, Japa, meditation, Satsanga, fasting, Pranayama and practice of thoughtlessness, will obviate this obstacle. Pranayama checks the velocity of the mind and calms the bubbling mind. A young ambitious man is unfit to remain in a solitary cave. He who has done selfless service in the world for some years, and who has practised meditation for several years in the plains in solitary rooms can live in cave. Such a man only can really enjoy the solitude of Himalayan retreats.

When you constantly contemplate on the meaning of the Mahavakya "*Aham Brahma Asmi*" or "*Tat Tvam Asi*" through the process of Maha Vakyanusandhana, all the Vishayas (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling) will stop. But owing to the force of Samskaras, Manorajya (building castles in the air) will continue. Sleep also will intervene. If you are alert and if by protracted efforts and incessant, vigilant Svarupa-Chintana (meditation on Brahman) you get over these two obstacles, the steady Brahmakara Vritti and Brahma Jnana will dawn in no time. Ajnana will vanish. You will be established in Sahaja-Paramananda state. All Sanchita (accumulated) Karmas will be burnt up in the fire of wisdom.

20. Memory

When you sit for meditation, thoughts of your friends and office-work, memory of conversation that took place in the previous evening with your friends and relatives will disturb your mind and cause distraction. You will have to withdraw the mind again and again cautiously from these extraneous worldly thoughts and try continuously and fix it on your Lakshya or point. You will have to disregard and ignore the worldly thoughts. Be indifferent. Do not welcome these thoughts. Do not identify yourself with these thoughts or ideas. Say within yourself, "I do not want these thoughts. I have nothing to do with these thoughts." They will vanish gradually.

You may be living in a solitary cave in the Himalayas. You may be practising meditation. If the memory of your past experiences in the plains comes, if you allow the mind to dwell on it again and again, you are living actually on the plains only, though your abode is in the solitary retreats of the Himalayas. Further you do not lead the perfect divine life in the cave, because you lead the past worldly life again and again subjectively in the sacred cave. Thought is the real action.

When you climb the ladder of Yoga, when you walk in the spiritual path, do not look back, do not remember your past experiences; kill all memory of your past experiences. Build up your mental Bhava 'I am Brahman' strongly. Strengthen it. Generate again and again Brahmakara Vritti. Keep it steady by regular and constant meditation. A single thought of your past experience will give a new lease of life to the thought-image or memory-picture, rejuvenate and strengthen it and will pull you down. It will be difficult for you to climb up again.

If the memory of past experiences recurs again and again, the old mental images will be energised or galvanised. They will express themselves with redoubled force again and again. They will crowd together or come in packs or in multitudes or in a party and attack you with formidable vehemence. Therefore, look not back. Destroy memory of past experiences by remembering God.

Be concerned yourself with the present only. Do not look back upon the past or the future. Then alone you will be happy. You will be free from cares, worries and anxieties. You will have a long life. Destroy the Sankalpas through strenuous efforts. Meditate ceaselessly upon that Satchidananda Brahman and attain that Supreme immaculate seat. May you prosper gloriously! May you live drowned in the ocean of Brahmic bliss in an illumined state!

Exercise Vichara and Viveka in your attempts. Do not think of the past and future. The past days of boyhood, your days of schooling are all dreams when you are at forty. The whole life is a Deergha-Svapna (long dream). The past is a dream to you now. The future also will be the same hereafter. You will have to deal with the present only. You will have to cut down the two wings of the mind-bird, two wings representing the past and the future. But it will flutter about as there is the present. Keep off all external impressions. Stop the Vrittis. Silence the mind. Restrain the modifications of the mind. Concentrate. Overcome the multiplicity of ideas that result from the impressions. Give now a good food to the mind—some sublime thoughts of the Gita, Avadhoota Gita, meaning of OM, to reflect upon. After sometime the luring present also will vanish. The mind will become perfectly serene and tranquil. The highest knowledge of the Self will dawn in your pure mind. You will rest in Brahman, the Adhishthana, the source, support, the basis and background for everything. You will get Jnananishtha or Svarupasthiti (Sat-Chit-Ananda State).

21. Mental Talking

During meditation, you will be frequently talking to somebody mentally. Stop this evil habit. Have a careful watch over the mind.

22. Moha

Here comes another great obstacle which troubled even Sri Sankara. He had to attend the sick-bed and funeral rites of his mother, though he was a Sannyasin. A great sage, Pattinattu Swami of South India, sang when his mother died: "There was fire at first in Tripura-Samhara. Then there was fire in Lanka by Hanuman. Now the death of my beloved mother has caused burning fire in my stomach and heart. Let me also apply fire to this corpse of my mother." Moha is infatuated love for one's own body, wife, children, father, mother, brothers, sisters and property. Moha, like greed, takes various subtle forms. The mind gets attached to one name and form or other. If it is detached from one name and form, it clings tenaciously to another name and form.

Look at the Moha of monkeys. If the baby-monkey dies, the mother-monkey will carry the dead skeleton for two or three months. Such is the power of Moha! Mysterious is Maya! If the father receives a telegram that his only son is dead, he gets immediately a shock and faints. Sometimes he dies also. This is the power of Moha. The whole world runs through Moha. It is through Moha one is bound to the wheel of Samsara. One gets pain through Moha. Moha creates attachment. Moha is a kind of powerful liquor that brings intoxication in the twinkling of an eye. Even Sannyasins develop Moha for their Ashram and disciples. Moha should be eradicated by Viveka, Vairagya, Vichara, Atma-Chintana, devotion, seclusion, study of Vedantic literature, etc. Moha can only be removed in toto by renunciation and Sannyasa and Self-realisation.

You never wept when millions of people died in the world war. But you weep bitterly when your wife dies. Why? Because you have Moha for her. Moha creates the idea of 'mineness.' Therefore you say: "my wife, my son, my horse, my home." This is bondage. This is death. Moha creates infatuated love for sensual objects. Moha produces delusion and perverted intellect. Through the force of Moha, you mistake the unreal, dirty body for the real, pure Atman; you take the unreal world as a solid reality. These are the functions of Moha. Moha is a strong weapon of Maya.

23. Obstacles in Yoga

(From 'Rajayoga' of Patanjali)

Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, indolence, worldly-mindedness, sensuality, mistaken notion or illusion, missing the point, instability, causing distractions of the mind, these are the obstacles.

Diseases arise through the disturbance in the equilibrium in the three humours viz., wind, bile and phlegm. If there is more phlegm, the body becomes heavy. You cannot sit for a long time in the Asana. If there is more Tamas in the mind, you become lazy. Diseases may be due to irregularity in taking food, unwholesome food that cannot agree with the system, late vigil overnight, loss of seminal energy, checking the urine and faeces. Diseases can be removed by the practice of Asana, Pranayama and physical exercises, meditation, dietetic adjustment, fasting, purgatives, enema, bath, sun-treatment, sufficient rest, etc. First diagnose the case and find out the cause of the disease and then try for a remedy or consult some doctors.

In Styana, the person is unfit to do any practice on account of inexperience in the line and lack of Samskaras of previous births. It is indisposition of the mind to work. Dullness, laziness, etc., can be eradicated by Pranayama, Asana and active habits. Doubt is whether it is this or that. Such indecisive notion is doubt. The Yogi is not able to proceed further in the path of Yoga. He will doubt whether all that is said in the Yoga Sastras is true or not. This can be dispelled by right knowledge, Viveka, Vichara, study of scriptures and by Satsanga with Mahatmas.

Avirati is that tendency of the mind which unceasingly longs keenly for one or the other kind of sensual enjoyment on account of attachment. This is destroyed by Vairagya, looking into the faults of worldly objects and worldly life, such as impermanence, diseases, death, old age, miseries etc., and constant Satsanga with dispassionate Mahatmas and study of books on Vairagya.

Branti-Darshana is mistaking an undesirable state as the most desirable one due to illusion. Missing the point is going astray from the right path, Samadhi, and falling into the clutches of Siddhis. Mistaken notion is removed by Satsanga with Yogins. Missing the point and instability are removed by developing more Vairagya and doing constant and intense Sadhana in seclusion. Anavasthitatva or instability is that fickleness of the mind which does not allow the Yogi to remain in the state of Samadhi, even though he has reached it with great difficulty. Maya is powerful. There is many a slip between the cup and the lip. These obstacles do not come to those who do Japa of OM as stated in Sutra 28 of Chapter II.

When slight difficulties appear, do not stop the practice. Find out suitable means to eradicate the obstacles. Plod on till you get the highest Asamprajnata Samadhi. Success is bound to come if you are sincere and steady in Sadhana.

24. Other Obstacles

If you can give up idle talks and gossiping and idle curiosity to hear rumours and news of others and if you do not meddle with the affairs of others, you will have ample time to do meditation. Make the mind quiet during meditation. If worldly thoughts try to enter the mind during meditation reject them. Have steady devotion to truth. Be cheerful. Increase the Sattvic materials in you. You can enjoy everlasting bliss.

Environments are not bad, but your mind is bad. Your mind is not disciplined properly. Wage a war with this horrible and terrible mind. Do not complain against bad environments but complain first against your own mind. Train your mind first. If you practise concentration amidst unfavorable environments, you will grow strong, you will develop your will-force quickly and you will become a dynamic personality. See good in everything and transmute evil into good. This is real Yoga. This is the real work of a Yogi.

Leakage of energy, hidden undercurrent of Vasanas, lack of control of senses, slackness in Sadhana, waning of dispassion, lack of intense aspiration, irregularity in Sadhana are the various obstacles in the path of concentration.

25. Prejudice, Intolerance and Bigotry

Prejudice is unreasonable dislike for something or some person. Prejudice makes the brain callous. The brain cannot vibrate properly to grasp the things in their true light. One cannot endure honest differences of opinion. This is intolerance. Religious intolerance and prejudice are great obstacles in the path of God-realisation. Some orthodox Sanskrit Pandits strongly think that only Sanskrit-knowing people will have God-realisation. They think that English-knowing Sannyasins are barbarians and they cannot have Self-realisation. Look at the thick foolishness of these bigoted Pandits! Incorrigible, petty-minded, narrow-hearted, crooked sectarians! If one has prejudice against Bible or Koran, he cannot grasp the truths of these books. His brain becomes hard, stony and callous. A man can realise by studying and following the principles that are laid down in Koran, Bible or Zend Avesta or the Pali books of Lord Buddha.

Aspirants should try to remove prejudice of all sorts. Then only they can see truth everywhere. Truth is not the sole monopoly of the Sanskrit Pandits of Varanasi or the Vairagi of Ayodhya. Truth, Rama, Krishna, Jesus are the common property of all.

Sectarians and bigoted people confine themselves to a small circumscribed circle or area. They have no large heart. They cannot see the good points in others on account of their jaundiced vision. They think that their principles and doctrines only are good. They treat others with contempt. They think that their Sampradaya only is superior to others and that their Acharya only is a man of God-realisation. They always fight with others. There is no harm in praising one's own Guru and sticking to his principles and teachings. But one should pay equal regard to the teachings of other prophets and other saints. Then only the feeling of universal love and universal brotherhood will manifest. This will eventually lead to the realisation of God or Atman in all beings. Prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, sectarianism should be thoroughly eradicated. Prejudice and intolerance are forms of hatred.

26. Rajas and Tamas

Rajas and Tamas try to obstruct meditation. The mind that was calm owing to the preponderance of Sattva during the course of meditation, begins to tremble and quiver owing to the entry of Rajas in excess. Sankalpas (imaginations) increase in number. Restlessness increases. Thoughts of action manifest. Planning and scheming come in. Take a little rest. Again do Japa. Pray and meditate. Take a little walk.

27. Sankalpas

Free yourself from the base thoughts of the mind, the various useless Sankalpas (imaginations). Make ceaseless enquiry of Atman. Mark the word 'ceaseless.' This is important. Then only there will be dawn of spiritual knowledge. The Jnana-Surya (the Sun of Knowledge) will arise in the firmament of Chidakasa (knowledge-space).

28. Tamas or Inertia

A microscopic minority only is fit for wholetime meditation. People like Sadasiva Brahman and Sri Sankara only can spend the whole time in meditation. Many Sadhus who take to Nivritti Marga have become completely Tamasic. Tamas is mistaken for Sattva. This is a great blunder. One can evolve beautifully by doing Karma Yoga in the world if he knows how to spend his time profitably. A householder should seek the advice of Sannyasins and Mahatmas from time to time, draw a daily routine and adhere to it strictly amidst worldly activities. Rajas can be converted into Sattva. Intense Rajas takes a Sattvic turn. It is impossible to convert Tamas all of a sudden into Sattva. Tamas should be first turned into Rajas. Young Sadhus who take to Nivritti Marga do not stick to routine. They do not hear the words of elders. They do not obey the orders of the Guru. They want absolute independence from the very beginning. They lead a happy-go-lucky life. There is no one to check. They have their own ways. They do not know how to regulate the energy and how to chalk out a daily programme.

They aimlessly wander about from place to place. They become Tamasic within six months. They sit for half an hour in some Asana and imagine that they are realised souls. If an aspirant who has taken to Nivritti Marga finds that he is not evolving, that he is not improving in meditation, and is going into Tamasic state, he should at once take up some kind of service for some years and work vigorously. He should combine work along with meditation. This is wisdom. This is prudence. This is sagacity. Then he should go in for seclusion. One should use his common-sense throughout his Sadhana. It is very difficult to go out of Tamasic state. A Sadhaka should be very cautious. When Tamas tries to overtake him, he should immediately do some sort of brisk work. He can run in the open air, draw water from wells, etc. He should drive it off by some intelligent means or other.

29. Three Obstacles

When young aspirants take to absolute solitude and silence, they will have to face boldly three obstacles viz., depression, building castles in the air (Manorajya, Rasasvada) and hatred for householders, men and women. They become misanthropes. They should entertain cheerful thoughts. Watch the mind very often and radiate pure love for all. If one method does not help you in keeping up your Brahmacharya, you should take recourse to combination of various Sadhanas such as prayer, meditation, Pranayama, Satsanga, Sattvic diet, solitude, Vichara, Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Uddiyana Bandha, Nauli, Asvini Mudra, Yoga Mudra, etc. Then only you will be successful.

30. Trishna and Vasana

Desire or Trishna (thirsting for objects) is the enemy of peace. There cannot be an iota of happiness for a man who is thirsting for sensual objects. When this thirsting dies, man enjoys peace. Now only he can meditate and rest himself in the Self.

The Vasanas are very powerful. The senses and the mind are very turbulent and impetuous. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. That is the reason why the spiritual path is called the razor-path in Kathopanishad. There is no difficulty for a man of strong determination and iron will even in the razor-path. Strength comes from within at every step.

Constant effort, or ceaseless striving is necessary if you want to realise God. Vasanas, desires and Trishnas (cravings) and old worldly Samskaras (impressions) are obstacles in the path. The inner battle has to be fought again and again.

31. Vikshepa

Vikshepa is tossing or oscillation of the mind. This is an old habit of the mind. This is distraction of the mind. All Sadhakas generally complain of this trouble. The mind never stays at a fixed point for a long time. It jumps hither and thither like a monkey. It is always restless. This is due to the force of Rajas. Whenever Sri Jayadayal Goenka came to me for an interview he used to put always two questions: "Swamiji, what is the remedy to control sleep? How to remove Vikshepa? Give me easy and effective method." My answer was: "Take light diet at night. Do Sirshasana and Pranayama." Sleep can be conquered. Trataka, Upasana, Pranayama and Yoga will remove Vikshepa. It is better to have a combined method. This will be more effective.

According to Patanjali Maharshi, disease, mental inactivity, doubt, indifference, laziness, the tendency to go after sense-enjoyments, stupor, false perception, non-attainment of concentration, and falling away from that when attained on account of restlessness, are the main obstructing distractions. He prescribes Pranayama for destroying Rajas which induces Vikshepa and for getting one-pointed mind.

If you remove the oscillation of the mind, you will get one-pointedness of mind or Ekagrata. Ekagrata is a thing unknown to many. Max Muller writes: "Ekagrata is impossible for us (Westeners), when our minds are diverted in various directions through newspapers, telegrams, postal communications, etc." Ekagrata is an indispensable condition in all religious and philosophical speculations, and in Nididhyasana.

In the Gita, Lord Krishna prescribes a Sadhana for removing Vikshepa: "As often as the wavering and unsteady mind goeth forth, so often reining it in, let him bring it under the control of the Self. Abandoning without reserve all desires born of the imagination, by the mind curbing in the aggregate of the senses on every side. Little by little let him gain tranquillity by means of reason controlled by steadiness; having made the mind abide in the Self, let him not think of anything."—Chapter VI-24, 25, 26.

Trataka is an effective method in destroying Vikshepa. Practise this for half an hour on a picture of Lord Krishna or on a black point on the wall. At first do this for two minutes and gradually increase the period. Close the eyes when tears come. Look steadily at the object without winking. Do not strain the eyes. Look gently. There are students who can do Trataka for 2 or 3 hours. For full description read my book "Kundalini Yoga."

A weak aspirant, though he may be strong in concentration, is overcome by idleness. But a strong aspirant, if he is weak in concentration, is overpowered by Vikshepa or tossing of mind. Concentration and energy should therefore be well-balanced.

32. Vishayasakti

Vishayasakti is intense desire or attachment to sensual pleasures or sense-objects. This is the greatest of all obstacles. The mind refuses to leave completely the sensual pleasures. Through the force of Vairagya and meditation, the desires get suppressed for some time. All of a sudden the mind thinks of sensual pleasures through the force of habit and memory. There arises mental disturbance. Concentration decreases. The mind moves outwards in sensual objects. In the Gita you will find: "O son of Kunti, the excited senses of even a wise man, though he be striving, impetuously carry away his mind. Such of the roving senses as the mind yieldeth to that hurries away the understanding, just as the gale hurries away a ship upon the waters."—Chapter II-60, 67. "The objects of senses, but not the relish for them turn away from an abstemious dweller in the body; and even relish turneth away from him after the Supreme is seen."—Chapter II-59.

Some desires lurk in the corners of the mind. Just as old dirt from the corners of the room comes out when you sweep, so also through the pressure of Yogic practices, these old lurking desires come out to the surface of the mind with redoubled force. The Sadhaka should be very careful. He should be ever watching the mind vigilantly. He must nip the desires in the bud by developing his Vairagya, Viveka and increasing his period of

Japa, and meditation. He must observe Akhanda Mouna and do vigorous meditation, and Pranayama. He should live on milk and fruits for 40 days. He should observe fast on Ekadasi days. He should give up mixing with anybody completely. He should never come out of the room. He should plunge himself deep into the Sadhana. Kashaya means hidden Vasana. This comes under the category of Vishayasakti. Worldly ambitions of all sorts can be included under this heading. Ambition makes the mind very restless. Man should have the one laudable ambition of getting Self-realisation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HIGHER OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

1. Ambition and Desire

Whenever desires trouble you, try to attain Vairagya by looking into the defects of sensual life. Cultivate dispassion or indifference to sensual pleasures. Think that enjoyment produces pain and various troubles and everything is perishable. Withdraw the mind again and again from the objects and fix it on the Immortal Self or the picture of the Lord. When the mind attains a state of equanimity, when it is freed from distraction and Laya, do not disturb it.

Ambitious objects, desires and various disturbing thoughts are other obstacles. Destroy desires by Vichara, control of Indriyas, Vairagya, Viveka and Brahmacharya. Do not plan. Do not imagine. Do not try to fulfil them. Be indifferent. Annihilate emotion. Do not be attached to desires. Desires are powerless in the absence of emotions and attachment. They dwindle and die. Find out the causes of disturbing thoughts and remove them one by one. Watch the mind carefully. Dwell in solitude. Do not mix. Have patience, Utsaha and courage. If you find great interest and happiness in meditation, if you are progressing, stop study also for some time. Study also is a Vishaya. God is not in books. He can be reached only by constant meditation. Erudition is to gain applause in society. Avoid pedantry. Sometimes the mind feels tired. Then take complete rest. Do not strain the mind. Go in for evening stroll along the seaside, along the banks of Ganga or any other delightful spot. Chant OM. Feel OM. Hum Om. Reduce the period of meditation for a couple of days. Use your strong common-sense and hear the voice from within often. Observe the moods of the mind. The two currents, Harsha and Soka, are moving in the mind. When you are depressed, go in for a good walk. Close the books. Think of sublime thoughts. Feel you are all joy. Remember that these are all Dharmas of the Upadhi and they do not belong to the thing itself—ATMAN. They will pass away quickly.

2. Moral and Spiritual Pride

As soon as aspirant gets some spiritual experiences or Siddhis, he is puffed up with vanity and pride. He thinks too much of himself. He separates himself from others. He treats others with contempt. He cannot mix with others. If any one has some moral qualifications such as spirit of service or self-sacrifice, or Brahmacharya, he will say: "I am an Akhanda-Brahmachari for the last twelve years. Who is pure like myself? I lived on leaves and gram for four years. I have done service in the Ashram for ten years. No one can serve like myself." Just as worldly people are puffed up with the pride of wealth, so also Sadhus and aspirants are puffed up with their moral qualifications. This kind of pride is also a serious obstacle in the path of God-realisation. It must be eradicated thoroughly. As long as a man boasts of himself, so long he is the same little Jiva only. He cannot have Divinity.

3. Religious Hypocrisy (Dambha)

There are as many fashions in Sadhus as there are in worldly persons. Just as hypocrisy prevails in the worldly persons, so also hypocrisy manifests in aspirants, Sadhus and Sannyasins who have not completely purified the lower nature. They pretend to be what they are not in reality. They pose as big Mahatmas and Siddha-Purushas when they do not know even the alphabet of Yoga or spirituality. They put on serious Sunday-faces which some Christian Missionaries sometimes assume on Sabbath days. This is a dangerous Vritti. They cheat others. They boast and brag too much of themselves. They do mischief wherever they go. They practise hypocrisy to get respect, honour, good food and clothing and to cheat credulous simpletons. There is no greater crime than trading in religion. This is a capital sin. Householders can be excused. But we cannot excuse the aspirants and Sadhus who are treading the path of spirituality and who have renounced everything for God-realisation. Religious hypocrisy is more dangerous than the hypocrisy of worldly persons. A long drastic course of treatment is needed for its eradication. A religious hypocrite is very far away from God. He cannot dream of God-realisation. Thick Tilakas, elaborate painting of the forehead, wearing of too many Tulasi and Rudraksha Malas on neck, arms, forearms and ears are some of the external signs of religious hypocrisy.

4. Name and Fame (Kirti and Pratishtha)

One can renounce even wife, son, property, but it is difficult to renounce name and fame. Pratishtha is established name and fame. This is a great obstacle in the path of God-realisation. This brings downfall in the end. This does not allow the aspirant to march forward in the spiritual path. He becomes a slave of respect and honour. As soon as the aspirant gets some purity and ethical progress, ignorant people flock to him and pay homage and salutations. The aspirant gets puffed up with pride. He thinks he is a great Mahatma now. He becomes eventually a slave of his admirers. He cannot notice his slow downfall. The moment he mixes up freely with householders, he loses what little he had gained during eight or ten years. He cannot influence the public now. The admirers also leave him because they do not find any solace or influence in his company.

The people imagine that the Mahatma has got Siddhis and they can get wealth and children through his grace, and roots for removal of diseases. They always approach a Sadhu with various motives. The aspirant through bad association loses his Vairagya and Viveka. Attachment and desires crop up now in his mind. Therefore an aspirant should hide himself always. Nobody should know what sort of Sadhana he is doing. He should never attempt to exhibit any Siddhi. He should be very humble. He should pass for quite an ordinary man. He should not accept any rich present from householders. He will be affected by the bad thoughts of those who offer presents. He should never think that he is superior to anybody. He should always treat others with respect. He should not treat others with contempt. Then only respect will come by itself. He should treat respect, honour, name and fame as dung or poison. He should wear disrespect and dishonour as a golden necklace. Then only he will reach the goal safely.

Building Ashrams and making disciples bring about the downfall of the aspirant. They are also stumbling-blocks in the path of God-realisation. The aspirant becomes another sort of householder. He develops institutional egoism. He gets attached to the Ashram and disciples. He gets Mamata (mineness) for the building and Chelas. He has the same cares, worries and anxieties for running the Ashram and magazine and feeding his disciples. He develops slave mentality and weak will. Thoughts of the Ashram revolve in his mind when he is in a dying condition. Some Ashram is nicely conducted by the 'spiritual head' of the institution while he is alive. When he passes away, the disciples who are petty-minded fight amongst themselves. Cases in the courts are going on. The Ashram becomes a fighting centre afterwards. Ashram-owners have to flatter the donors and have to appeal for funds very often. How can thoughts of God remain in his mind when one has his mind fixed on collection of money and developing the Ashram? Those who have started the Ashram may say now: "We are doing good to the people in various ways. We are having religious classes daily. We feed poor people in various ways. We are training religious students."

It is quite true that an Ashram that is run by a selfless dynamic Yogi and a realised Jivanmukta is a dynamic centre of spirituality. It is spiritual nucleus for the spiritual uplift of thousands of people. Such centres are needed in all parts of the world. Such Ashrams can do immense spiritual good to the country. But such ideal Ashrams with ideal spiritual heads to run the institution are very, very rare nowadays.

The founders of the Ashram in course of time become unconsciously slaves of worship and Puja. Maya works in various ways. They are quite eager that people should drink their Charanamrita. How can a man who has the Bhava that he should be worshipped as Avatara serve the public? Workers are petty-minded. They fight amongst themselves for trifling matters and disturb the peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram. Where is peace in the Ashram then? How can outsiders who visit the Ashram for getting Santi enjoy peace there?

The founders of the Ashram should live on daily Bhiksha from outside. They should lead an ideal life of absolute self-sacrifice, a life of ideal simplicity, like the late Kalikamliwala of Rishikesh who carried water-pot on his head for the Ashram and who lived on Bhiksha from outside. Then only they can do real good to the people. Founders of the Ashram should never appeal for funds to the public. It brings great discredit to those who tread the path of God-realisation. It is another way of respectable begging. The habit of begging destroys the subtle, sensitive nature of the intellect and those who appeal for funds frequently do not know what they are exactly doing, just as the lawyers and those who visit the houses of ill-fame have lost the discriminative faculty of finding out the truth from untruth, purity from impurity. Intelligent people use intelligent methods for collecting money. Nowadays there are intelligent thieves who knock away the money in tram-cars by giving morphine injection. The following one is an intelligent way of modern begging. An intelligent young educated boy boards the train with a dozen printed cards in his hands and distributes them to the passengers. There it is written: "I am the grandson of the Dewan of Mysore. My father died all of a sudden. My mother is aged 85. One brother is dumb. Another is blind. Kindly help me with some money." This is begging on modern lines. He never stretches a plate or bowl for begging nor talks anything. But he distributes printed cards. He appears with neat open coat, collar, tie, shirt, pants and Ell-wood hat. He collects some money, gets back the cards, quietly walks down and then enters another compartment. Begging kills Atma-Balam. It produces wrong impression on the minds of the public. Where is freedom if one begs? People have lost faith in the founders of the Ashram. If anything comes by itself without asking, it can be accepted. Then you can do some work independently. Householders who conduct Ashrams can appeal for funds.

It is very difficult to get good workers for the Ashram. Then why do you bother about building Ashrams when you have neither money, nor workers nor dynamic, spiritual force? Keep quiet. Do meditation. Evolve yourself. Mind your own business. Reform yourself first. How can you help others when you yourself grope in darkness, when you are blind? How can a blind man lead another blind man? Both will fall in the deep abyss and break their legs.

Power, name, fame and wealth stiffen the ego. They strengthen the personality. Hence renounce them if you want to attain Immortality and Eternal Peace.

Lastly, I have to point out that though we have not got at present the first-class type of Ashrams, yet there are good Ashrams of the second-class type that are run by noble, Sattvic souls, who do great service to the country in a variety of ways, bring out valuable philosophical books and train students in the practice of meditation and Yoga. They render selfless service. Their works are to be greatly congratulated indeed. It is the duty of rich people to render them spontaneously financial and all sorts of help. May God bestow on them inner spiritual strength to disseminate their message of love, service and peace! My silent homage and salutations to these rare, exalted and selfless souls!

5. Elementals (Bhuta-Ganas)

Sometimes, these elementals appear during meditation. They are strange figures, some with long teeth, some with big faces, some with big bellies, some with faces on the belly and some with faces on the head. They are inhabitants of the Bhuta Loka. They are the attendants of Lord Siva. They have terrifying forms. They do not cause any harm at all. They simply appear on the stage. They come to test your strength and courage. They can do nothing. They cannot stand before a pure, ethical aspirant. Repetition of OM will throw them at a distance. You must be fearless. A coward is absolutely unfit for the spiritual line. Develop courage by constantly feeling you are Atman. Deny and negate the body-idea. Practise Nididhyasana always.

6. Visions

Visions and experiences come and go. They are not in themselves the culminating point in the Sadhana. He who attaches much importance to these small visions does not march swiftly on the path. Therefore abandon the idea of these experiences. The final experience, intuitional and direct, of the Supreme alone is the true one.

Rise above the visions. The vision that you see in meditation is a hindrance in the path to Samadhi or God-realisation. When you see them, the mind will be fixed on these visions throughout the day instead of on God. Avoid these visions and the thought of them. Be indifferent. Substitute the thought of the Lord.

7. Siddhis

There are nine Riddhis and eight major Siddhis and eighteen minor Siddhis. The eight Siddhis are Anima (atomic size), Mahima (colossal size), Garima (excessive bulk), Laghima (extreme lightness), Prapti (attainment of whatever you desire), Prakamya (unhampered will), Isitva (Lordliness) and Vasitva (control over everything). Riddhi means affluence. It is inferior to Siddhi.

Do not think too much of psychic Siddhis. Clairvoyance and clairaudience are not worth having when far greater illumination and peace are possible without the Siddhis than with them.

Desire for powers will act like puffs of air which may blow out the lamp of Yoga that is being carefully tended. Any slackness in feeling it due to carefulness or selfish desires for Siddhis will blow out the little spiritual light that the Yogi has kindled after so much struggle and will hurl the student down into the deep abyss of ignorance. He cannot rise up again to the original height which he ascended in the hill of Yoga. Temptations are simply waiting to overwhelm the unwary student. Temptations of the astral, mental and Gandharva worlds are more powerful than the earthly temptations.

Various psychic Siddhis and other powers come to the Yogi who has controlled his senses, Prana and mind. They are stumbling-blocks. They allure the Yogic students. Sadhakas should be very careful. They should shun them ruthlessly as mere trifles or worthless things.

If you practise regular meditation and concentration, you are bound to get some psychic powers. You should not use these powers for base and selfish purposes, for gaining some material end or other. You will then face a downfall. You will be punished by Mother Nature. Action and reaction are equal and opposite. Every wrong action is bound to cause reaction. I again and again seriously warn you. Beware! Power, women, money and erudition act as powerful intoxicants. The possessor does not know what he is exactly doing. His intellect becomes turbid. His understanding gets clouded. You will not be tempted by these powers if you are established in the practice of Yama or self-restraint.

There is no such thing as miracle or Siddhi. An ordinary man is quite ignorant of higher spiritual things. He is sunk in oblivion. He is shut up from higher transcendental knowledge. So he calls some extraordinary occurrences or events as miracles. To a Yogi who understands things in the light of Yoga, miracle is nothing. Just as a man of the village is astonished when he sees an aeroplane or a talkie picture for the first time, so also a man of the world is stunned when he witnesses an 'extraordinary' spectacle for the first time.

8. Kashaya

Kashaya is the subtle influence in the mind produced by enjoyment and left there to fructify in time to come and distract the mind from Samadhi. This is a serious obstacle in meditation. It does not allow the Sadhaka to enter into Samadhi Nishtha. It induces the subtle memory of pleasures enjoyed. It is hidden Vasana. From the Samskaras, Vasanas originate. Samskara is the cause and Vasana is the effect. It is a king of Mala (impurity of mind).

Kashaya means colouring. Raga, Dvesha and Moha are the Kashaya or colouring of the mind. Constant Vichara coupled with Brahma-Bhavana is the only potent remedy to eradicate this dire malady, Kashaya.

9. Laya

Wake up the mind in Laya. Even though you have conquered Laya and distraction by repeated practice by Vairagya and Jnanabhyasa or Brahma-Chintana, yet the mind will not enter a state of perfect balance or serenity. It will be in an intermediate stage. The mind is still not freed from Raga or attachment which is the seed of all its activity in the direction of external objects. There is still lurking passion or hidden Vasanas or Kashaya. You will have to restrain the mind again and again by Vichara and do rigorous meditation and practise Samprajnata or Savikalpa Samadhi. Finally, you must rest yourself in Asamprajnata or Seedless Samadhi (Nirbija Samadhi).

10. Rasasvada

Rasasvada is another kind of experience. It is bliss that comes from lower Savikalpa Samadhi. The Sadhaka who has experienced this supersensual bliss imagines that he has reached the final destination and gives up his Sadhana. Just as a man digs the earth very deep to find out the most precious treasure and gems, just as a man is not satisfied with petty things he has found out just beneath the surface of the ground, so also the Sadhaka should continue his Sadhana till he gets the unconditioned Bhuma, or highest goal of life. He should never be satisfied with Alpam or lower experiences. He should compare his experiences with the highest experiences of sages that are described in the Upanishads and find out whether they exactly tally with them or not. He should exert till he reaches the Jnana Bhumika, till he becomes a Brahma-Varishtha. He should struggle till he gets the inner feeling of Apta-Kama, Krita-Kritya, and Prapta-Prapya. "I have obtained all desires. I have done everything. I know everything. There is nothing more to be known. There is nothing more to be obtained."

This obstacle (Rasasvada) prevents the Sadhaka from enjoying the highest Nirvikalpa Bliss. Vichara, discrimination, prayer, Pranayama, further earnestness and struggle in meditation will remove the above obstacle.

11. Tushnimbhuta Avastha

Sometimes the mind remains quiet for a short time. You will find neither Raga nor Dvesha in the mind. This silent state of the mind is called Tushnim Avastha. It occurs in the Jagrat state. The aspirant mistakes this for Samadhi. This is a neutral state of the mind. This is an obstacle in the path of God-realisation. He should overcome this state of mind by careful introspection and vigorous meditation. A Sadhaka through experience and acute acumen can find out exactly the nature of the various states of the mind. He should adopt effective methods to control those states. Mere study of books will not help him much. Experience and practice will do him much real good.

12. Stabdha Avastha

Stabdha Avastha is another kind of mental state. It is stupefaction arising from fear or wonder. It is akin to Tushnim Avastha. This is also another obstacle in the path. When you experience some astounding news the mind gets stunned for some time. This is Stabdha Avastha. Tushnim and Stabdha Avasthas are Jada states. There is no perfect awareness. The mind remains like a log of wood in a state of inertia. It becomes unfit for active meditation. When these states prevail, there is heaviness of body. The mind is dull. There is lack of cheerfulness. The mind also becomes dull for the time being. The student can find out these states by these symptoms. An intelligent Sadhaka who practises meditation daily can easily find out the different states into which the mind passes. A beginner finds meditation dry in the beginning. But an advanced student who has an intelligent and comprehensive understanding of the nature of the mind and its operations and the laws of the mental plane will find meditation very interesting. The more he meditates, the more he gains control of the mind. He can understand the nature of the Vrittis and the different mental states. He can control them. He will actually feel that he is gaining inner spiritual strength and that he cannot be easily swayed by the mind now.

13. Avyaktam

When you practise Samadhi, many obstacles such as sleep, laziness, break of continuity, confusion, temptation, infatuation, desire for worldly pleasure and feeling of blankness will assail you. You must be on the alert. You must be vigilant and circumspective. You will have to get over these impediments step by step through patient dauntless efforts. You will have to cross the void also. What appears to you as a void when all the Vrittis have perished is not really a void. This is Avyaktam. Cross this void also. It will try to overpower you. You are left alone now. You have nothing to see and nothing to hear. There is none to cheer you. You will have to depend on yourself. Presence of mind is needed at this critical juncture. Draw courage and strength from within. Sage Uddalaka also encountered much difficulty in crossing this void.

Valediction

O My Dear Aspirants! I send you the thought-currents of Peace from the peaceful atmosphere of the sacred Himalayas, the abode of Rishis.

God is Santi Svarupa (Embodiment of Peace). Srutis emphatically declare: "*Ayam Atma Santah*—This Atman (Self) is Silence." Desire is the greatest enemy of Peace. Desire causes distraction of various sorts. There is no Peace for him who has no concentration. There can be no happiness for the unpeaceful. In the Supreme Peace all pains, sorrows, miseries and tribulations vanish for ever.

Dear brothers! Children of Immortality! Plod on. Push on. Do not look backward. Forget the past. Forget the body and world. But forget not the centre. Forget not the source. A glorious brilliant future is awaiting you. Purify. Serve. Love. Give.

Live in Om. Feel always and everywhere the Indwelling, All-pervading Presence. Realise the Self. Rest in the magnanimous Ocean of Peace, in the stupendous Sea of Stillness. Drink the nectar of Immortality. May the Indwelling Presence be your Centre, Ideal and Goal. May joy, Bliss, Immortality, Peace, Glory and Splendour abide with you for ever.

Nectar's Sons! I have placed before you in detail all obstacles that stand in the way of God-realisation and have suggested various effective methods to remove these obstacles. Stand up now like an undaunted spiritual soldier in the Adhyatmic battlefield. Become a spiritual hero of great intrepidity and unique chivalry. Get over the obstacles fearlessly one by one and manifest divine glory, splendour, purity and sanctity. Wait patiently with a calm and serene mind for results. Do not be hasty, rash and impetuous. Allow proper time for regeneration and renovation. *Nil desperandum*—Never despair. Wear the Vairagya-coat of arms. Wield the shield of Viveka. Hold the banner of faith. March boldly and cheerfully with the band of BHUM BHUM BHUM; OM OM OM; RAM RAM RAM; SHYAM SHYAM SHYAM. Stop not till you drink the elixir of immortality to heart's content. Stop not, dear Sadhakas, till you enter the immortal realms of eternal sunshine, undecaying beauty, unfading ecstasy, supreme bliss, infinite joy, unalloyed felicity and unbroken peace. This is your final destination. You can take eternal rest now. This is your goal. This is your highest aim and purpose of life. Rest now in everlasting peace, friends! Good-bye unto you all. Clear yourselves. Share this rare panacea with your brothers. Elevate them. This noble and stupendous selfless work is awaiting you now in the grand plan. Fulfil the Divine Will and become a Buddha of undying fame. Salutations unto you all!

When a bee finds that its feet are stuck in the honey, it slowly licks its feet several times and then flies away with joy. Even so, extricate yourself from the mind's sticking and clinging to this body and children owing to Raga and Moha (attachment and attraction) through Vairagya (dispassion) and meditation. Fly away with joy from this cage of flesh and bone to the source, Brahman or Absolute!

No more words. Enough of discussions and heated debates. Retire into solitary room. Close your eyes. Have deep silent meditation. Feel His presence. Repeat His name OM with fervour, joy and love. Fill your heart with Prema (love). Destroy the Sankalpas, thoughts, whims, fancies and desires when they arise from the surface of the mind. Withdraw the wandering mind and fix it upon the Lord. Now, Nishtha, meditation will become deep and intense. Do not open your eyes. Do not stir from your seat. Merge in Him. Dive deep into the innermost recesses of the heart. Plunge into the shining Atman (Soul) within. Drink the nectar of Immortality. Enjoy the silence now. I shall leave you there alone. Nectar's sons, Rejoice! Peace, Peace! Silence! Glory, Glory!

CHAPTER NINE

EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

1. Various Experiences in Meditation

I. In the beginning of meditation, lights of various colours, such as red, white, blue, green, a mixture of red and green lights, etc., appear in front of the forehead. They are Tanmatric lights. Every Tattva has its own hue. Prithvi Tattva has yellow colour. Apas Tattva has white colour. Agni has red colour. Vayu has green colour. Akasa has blue colour. The coloured lights are due to these Tattvas only.

Sometimes a big sun or moon, or lightninglike flashes appear in front of the forehead during meditation. Do not mind these appearances. Shun them. Try to dive deep into the source of these lights.

Sometimes Devas, Rishis, Nitya Siddhas will appear in meditation. Receive them with honour. Bow to them. Get advice from them. They appear before you to help and give you encouragement.

In the beginning of meditation and concentration you will see in the centre of the forehead a resplendent, flashing light. This will last for half or one minute and then disappear. The light will flash either from above or sideways. Sometimes a sun of 6 inches or 8 inches in diameter with or without rays will be seen. You will see the form of your Guru or Upasya-Murty also.

When you get glimpses of the Self, when you see the blazing light, when you get some other extraordinary spiritual experiences, do not fall back in terror. Do not give up the Sadhana. Do not mistake them for a phantom. Be brave. March boldly with joy.

II. What sort of dreams do you get? What kind of thoughts arise in your mind as soon as you wake up, when you are alone in the room, when you walk in the streets? Are you able to keep up the same state of mind you have during meditation in a closed room when you walk in the street also? Introspect and closely watch your mind. If the mind is perturbed when you walk in the streets, you are still weak, you have not advanced in meditation, you have not grown in spirituality. Continue the meditation vigorously. An advanced student will have thoughts of Brahman even in dream.

Understand the power of silence. The power of silence is infinitely greater than lectures, talks, orations and discourses. Lord Dakshinamurti taught the four youths, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara through silence. The language of silence is the language of God. The language of silence is the language of heart. Sit silently and restrain the mental modifications. Sit silently and send out the inner spiritual force to the world. The whole universe will be benefited. Live in silence. Become silent. Rest in silence. Know the Self and be free.

When you sit for meditation in the morning send out your love and peace to all living beings. Say: *Sarvesham Santir Bhavatu*: May peace be unto all. *Sarvesham Svasti Bhavatu*: May prosperity be unto all. *Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu*: May happiness be unto the whole world.

In the peace all the pains are destroyed; for the intellect of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady. When the mental peace is attained, there is no hankering after sense-objects. The Yogi has perfect mastery over his reason. The intellect abides in the Self. It is quite steady. The miseries of the body and the mind come to an end.

During meditation you will have no idea of time. You will not hear any sounds. You will have no idea of environments. You will forget your name and all sorts of relationship with others. You will enjoy peace and bliss. Gradually you will rest in Samadhi.

In the beginning, the aspirant remains in a state of bliss for some time. He comes down. By constant practice of incessant meditation, he continues to remain in that exalted state for ever. Later on, the body-idea completely vanishes.

When you enter into deep meditation, you will have no consciousness of your body or surroundings, you will have equanimity of mind. You will not hear any sound. There will be stoppage of upgoing and down-going sensations. The consciousness of egoism will also gradually vanish. You will experience inexplicable joy and indescribable happiness. Gradually, reasoning and reflection also will cease.

When you enter the silence through deep meditation, the world outside and all your troubles will drop away. You will enjoy supreme peace. In this silence is Supreme Light of lights. In this silence is undecaying Bliss. In this silence is real strength and joy.

When you practise rigorous meditation, Kevala Kumbhaka or natural retention of breath without Puraka (inhalation) and Rechaka (exhalation) will come by itself. When Kevala Kumbhaka comes, you will enjoy immense peace and you will have one-pointed mind.

The visions of the Rishis concerning the soul and such other transcendental matters, manifest themselves to one who is devoted to the constant duties prescribed by the Srutis and the Smritis, who is unselfish and who seeks to know the Supreme Brahman.

During deep meditation, the aspirant forgets the external world first and then the body.

That feeling of rising up during meditation is a sign that indicates that you are going above body-consciousness. You will feel a peculiar Ananda (bliss) also when you experience this feeling. In the beginning this feeling of rising up will last for a minute only. After a minute you will feel that you have come back to normal consciousness again.

You will enjoy a sort of higher type of indescribable peace during your meditation. But it will take a long time to get real spiritual experiences or merge the mind in your Lakshya or chosen object of meditation or get over body-consciousness completely. Be patient. Persevere. You will succeed.

The attainment of cosmic consciousness is permanent in realised souls. It is like a glimpse in the beginning. Through steady meditation, it becomes permanent or natural.

III. Concentration is fixing the mind on any point, external or internal. During meditation the mind becomes calm, serene and steady. The various rays of the mind are collected and focussed in the object of meditation. The mind is centred on the Lakshya. There will be no tossing of the mind. One idea occupies the mind. The whole energy of the mind is concentrated on that one idea. The senses become still. They do not function. Where there is deep concentration, there is no consciousness of the body and surroundings. He who has good concentration can visualise the picture of the Lord very clearly within the twinkling of an eye.

Do not try to drive away the unimportant thoughts. The more you try, the more they will return, and the more they will gain strength. You will tax your energy. Become indifferent. Fill the mind with divine thoughts. They will gradually vanish.

All Vrittis or mental modifications such as anger, jealousy, hatred, etc., assume subtle forms when you practise meditation. They are thinned out. They should be eradicated in toto through Samadhi or blissful union with the Lord. Then only you are quite safe. Latent Vrittis will be waiting for opportunities to assume a grave and expanded form. You should be very careful and vigilant.

When your meditation becomes deep, you will lose consciousness of the body. You will feel that there is no body. You will experience immense joy. There will be mental consciousness. Some lose sensation in the legs, then in the spinal column, the back, the trunk and the hands. When the sensation is lost in these parts, they feel that the head is suspended in the air. The mind may try to run back in the body.

Do not mistake a little concentration or one-pointedness of mind for Samadhi. Simply because you have risen a little above body-sensation on account of a little concentration, do not think that you have attained Samadhi.

Samadhi or superconscious state is the highest goal which one can attain through meditation. It is not a thing that can be attained through a little practice. To attain Samadhi one should observe strict Brahmacharya, dietetic restrictions and must have purity of heart. If these are not attained there is no possibility of attaining that state. These preliminary qualifications should be grasped well and then only one must try to enter the portals of Samadhi. None can enter Samadhi unless he is himself a great devotee of the Lord. Otherwise the so-called Samadhi becomes Jada to him.

The state of Samadhi is beyond description. There is no means or language to give expression to it. Even in worldly experience, you cannot express the taste of an apple to one who has not tasted it nor the nature of the colour to a blind man. The state is All-bliss, Joy and Peace. This much only can be said. One has to feel this himself.

When you practise meditation, worldly thoughts, cravings and Vasanas are suppressed. If you are irregular in meditation and if your dispassion wanes, they try to manifest again. They persist and resist. Therefore, be regular in meditation and do more vigorous Sadhana. Cultivate more dispassion. They will be gradually thinned out and eventually destroyed.

You can ford over the boisterous ocean of the world through meditation. Meditation will save you from all sorrows. Therefore be regular in your meditation.

2. Anahata Sounds

Anahata sounds (or the melody) are the mystic sounds heard by the Yogi at the beginning of his cycle of meditation. This subject is termed Nada-Anusandhana or an enquiry into the mystic sounds. This is a sign of purification of the Nadis or astral currents, due to Pranayama. The sounds can also be heard after the uttering of the Ajapa Gayatri Mantra, "Hamsah Soham," a lakh of times. The sounds are heard through the right ear with or without closing the ears. The sounds are distinct when heard through closed ears. The ears can be closed by introducing the two thumbs into the ears through the process of Yoni Mudra. Sit in Padma or Siddha Asana, close the ears with right and left thumbs, and hear the sounds very attentively. Occasionally, you can hear the sounds through the left ear also. Practise to hear from the right ear only. Why do you hear through the right ear only or hear distinctly through the right ear? Because of the solar Nadi (Pingala) which is on the right side of the nose. The Anahata sound is also called Omkara Dhvani. It is due to the vibration of Prana in the heart.

TEN KINDS OF SOUNDS

Nada that is heard is of 10 kinds. The first is Chini (like the sound of the word Chini); the second is Chini-Chini; the third is the sound of bell; the fourth is that of conch; the fifth is that of Tantri (lute); the sixth is that of Tala (cymbals); the seventh is that of flute; the eighth is that of Bheri (drum); the ninth is that of Mridanga (double drum) and the tenth is that of clouds, viz., thunder.

Before thou settest the foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou hast to hear the voice of thy inner God (Highest Self) in 7 manners. The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate. The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyanis, awakening the twinkling stars. The next is as the melodious plaint of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell. And that is followed by the chant of Veena. The fifth sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear. It changes next into a trumpet-blast. The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud. The seventh swallows all the other sounds. They die, and then are heard no more.

3. Lights in Meditation

Various kinds of lights manifest during meditation owing to concentration. In the beginning, a bright white light, the size of a pin's point will appear in the forehead in the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, which corresponds tentatively to the Ajna-Chakra of the astral body. You will notice, when the eyes are closed, different coloured lights, white, yellow, red, smoky, blue, green, mixed lights, flashes like lightning, like fire, burning char-coal, fire-flies, moon, sun, stars. These lights appear in the mental space, Chidakasa. These are all Tanmatric lights. Each Tanmatra has its own specific colour. Prithvi (earth) Tanmatra has a yellow-coloured light; Apas (water) Tanmatra has a white-coloured light; Agni (fire) Tanmatra has a red-coloured light; Vayu (wind) Tanmatra has a smoky light; Akasa (sky) Tanmatra has a blue light. Yellow and white lights are very commonly seen. Red and blue lights are rarely noticeable. Frequently there is a combination of white and yellow lights. In the beginning, small balls of white light float about before the mind's eye. When you first observe this, be assured that the mind is becoming more steady and that you are progressing in concentration. After some months, the size of the light will increase and you will see a full blaze of white light, bigger than the sun. In the beginning, these lights are not steady. They come and disappear immediately. They flash out from above the forehead and from the sides. They cause peculiar sensations of extreme joy and happiness and there is an intense desire for a vision of these lights. When you have steady and systematic practice of two or three hours in the morning, and two to three hours at night, these lights appear more frequently and remain steadily for a long time. The vision of the lights is a great encouragement in Sadhana. It impels you to stick steadily to meditation. It gives you strong faith also in super-physical matters. The appearance of the light denotes that you are transcending the physical consciousness. You are in a semi-conscious state when the light appears. You are between two planes. You must not shake the body when these lights manifest. You must be perfectly steady in the Asana. You must breathe very, very slowly.

TRIANGLE (LIGHT) IN THE FACE

One whose food is moderate, whose anger has been controlled, who has given up all love for society, who has subdued his passions, who has overcome all pairs (heat and cold, etc.), who has given up his egoism, who does not bless anyone nor take anything from others—such a man during meditation obtains it (the triangle) in the face.

LIGHT FROM SUSHUMNA

"Vishoka Va Jyotismati." (Chap. I, Sutra 36. Patanjali-Yoga-Sutras). "You can attain Samadhi by meditation on the Effulgent One Who is beyond all sorrow."

Sometimes, during meditation you will see a brilliant dazzling light. You will find it difficult to gaze on this light. You will be compelled to withdraw your mental vision from this light. This dazzling light is the light emanating from the Sushumna in the heart.

FORMS IN THE LIGHTS

You will see two kinds of forms (1) lustrous forms of Devatas, (2) physical forms. You will see your Ishta Devata or tutelary deity (guiding Devata) in handsome dress and with various, valuable ornaments, flowers, garlands, with four hands and weapons. Siddhas, Rishis, etc., appear to encourage you. You will find a huge collection of Devatas and celestial ladies with various musical instruments in their hands. You will see beautiful flower-gardens, fine palatial buildings, rivers, mountains, golden temples, sceneries so lovely and picturesque as cannot be adequately described.

DAZZLING LIGHTS

Sometimes, during meditation, you will get very powerful, dazzling lights, bigger than the sun. They are white. In the beginning, they come and fade away quickly. Later on, they are steady, they become fixed for 10 or 15 minutes or half an hour according to the strength and degree of concentration. For those who concentrate on the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, the light appears in the forehead in the Trikuti, while for others who concentrate on the top of the head, Sahasrara Chakra, the light manifests on the top of the head. The light is so powerful and dazzling sometimes, that you have to withdraw yourself from looking at it and break the meditation. Some people are afraid and do not know what to do and how to proceed further. They come to me for instructions. I tell them that this is a new sensation which they have not hitherto experienced. By constant practice, the mind engaged in concentration will be used to it, and the fear will vanish. I ask them to go on with the practice. Some people concentrate on the heart, some on Trikuti, and some on the top of the head. It is a question of personal taste. It is easy to control mind by concentrating on the Trikuti. If you are used to fix on the Trikuti, stick to it always. Do not make frequent changes. Steadiness is very necessary. The beings and objects with whom you are in touch during the early period of meditation belong to the astral world. They are similar to human beings minus a physical overcoat. They have desires, cravings, love, hatred, etc., just as human beings have. They have fine bodies. They can move about freely. They have powers of materialisation, dematerialisation, multiplying, clairvoyant vision of an inferior order. The lustrous forms are higher Devatas of mental or higher planes who come down to give you Darshan, and encourage you. Various Saktis manifest in lustrous forms. Adore them. Worship them. Do mental Puja as soon as they give you Darshan. Angels are beings of mental or higher planes. They also appear before your mind's eye.

Sometimes, you will feel an invisible help, possibly from your Ishta Devata when you are actually pushed from the physical body into the new plane. That invisible power assists in your separating from the body and going above body-consciousness. You will have to mark carefully all these operations.

Do not waste your time in looking at these visions. This is only a curiosity. These are all encouragements to convince you of the existence of superphysical, metaphysical realities and the solid existence of Brahman. Drive these pictures. Fix yourself on the goal—Lakshya. Advance. Proceed seriously and energetically.

As soon as you retire for sleep, these lights manifest themselves without any exertion on your part. Just when you are going to transcend the physical consciousness, just when you are drowsy, these lights appear without your effort. Also in the morning, before you get up, in the transitional stage, half-asleep, half-awake, you will get again these lights by themselves without attempt.

Sometimes, during meditation, you will see an infinite blue sky, ethereal space. You will see yourself in the blue space as a black dot. Your form will appear in the centre of the light sometimes. Sometimes, you will notice highly vibratory, rotating particles in the light. You will see physical forms, human forms, children, women, adult males, Rishis with beards, Siddhas and lustrous Tejomaya forms. Visions are either subjective or objective, your own mental reactions or of realities on finer planes of matter. Universe consists of planes of matter of various grades of density. Rhythmical vibrations of Tanmatras in various degrees, give rise to the formation of various planes. Each plane has its things and beings. Visions may be of these things or beings. They may be purely imaginary. They may be crystalisation of your own intense thinking. You must discriminate in Yogic practices. Reason and common-sense must be used throughout.

4. Mystic Experiences of Sadhakas

"I had some peculiar sensation near my solar plexus in my meditation some three years back, that is to say, I noticed the whirling sensation of a flywheel rotating around. Then I came across some peculiar sights. I saw with the physical eyes a sort of white or blue hue of light all around the people's head and also on the surface of the buildings. When I gaze at the open, grand expanse of sky in daytime I notice a living worm-like white light moving hither and thither. When I work intently in my office, white shining lights flash across my eyes. Sometimes little sparks of light are noticed on my books. This gives me a peculiar joy and I begin to chant the name of the Lord: 'Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram.' Nowadays when I am cycling to my office a round light-like ball is seen and is visible till I reach my destination. The same thing appears at times when I gaze at the beautiful Akasa." .... "S."

"I meditated for five hours daily for a month in Gangotri. One day I had a great deal of dejection for two hours. I could not find any peace. I found it difficult to bear the mood of dejection. I then sat on the bank of Ganga and began to meditate upon Mahatma Gandhiji. It gave me solace then. After a few days I saw meditating on Sri Ramachandra for one and a half hour. This Saguna meditation automatically turned into a Nirguna type. I felt perfect Santi for 10 minutes. My mind was fully engrossed in the meditation on OM. This continued for half an hour. One day I had a different kind of experience. I opened my eyes after meditation. I found everything as Brahman without the help of reasoning. I had this mood the whole day. A Brahmachari spoke to me for one hour on that day. I was only hearing but my mind did not attend to his speech. It remained in the same mood. I could not recollect even a word of his speech.

"On another occasion I meditated for half an hour. I had a very ecstatic mood. But owing to some distraction from sounds from outside, the ecstatic mood dropped down. Again I began to meditate. I saw a beautiful light at the bottom of my heart. As soon as that light disappeared, I began to weep unconsciously. Somebody came to me and called me by my name. I did not know anything. He shook my body. I stopped weeping a little and looked at his face and wept again and again for 25 minutes." .... "V."

"I observed Mouna as a trial for the first time from 26-2-32 to 4-3-32."

"*Mistakes*":—Occasionally I had to express my ideas by gestures. On the last three days I uttered the words 'Yes,' 'enough,' 'what' absent-mindedly. I had the wrong imagination as if there was pain in the jaws. I had a great curiosity for speaking.

"*Benefits*":—I was able to do more work, reading, Japa and meditation for a longer period than usual. I could not sleep before midnight. The ideas of books were rolling on till midnight. No room for anger and irritability. I was not able to get anything by heart. I tried to get by heart a few Slokas but could not. It was due to my previous habit of uttering once or twice loudly. ...."Ram."

"I did Pranayama for a month and then began to hear some sweet melodious sounds or Nadas of different sorts, viz., flute, violin, bell-sound, Mridang, sounds from cluster of bells, conch sound, drum sound, sound of thunder, sometimes from right ear only, while at other times from both the ears." ......"N."

"During concentration I used to smell extraordinary sweet fragrance and good smell." ...."R."

"I used to see during meditation in my Trikuti a blazing sun, a dazzling light and brilliant star. The vision was not steady at all." ...."G."

"I used to have Darshan of some Rishis in my Trikuti during the course of concentration. I used to see my Ishtam, Lord Krishna, with flute in his hands." .... "S."

"I used to see at times coloured lights, red, green, blue and white in Trikuti during my meditation. Sometimes I used to see a blue expansive sky. I myself appeared as a dot in that blue sky." .... "V."

"During meditation I used to see several Devatas and Devis with lustrous Tejomaya bodies with beautiful ornaments." ...."R."

"Sometimes during meditation I used to see a big void only." .... "T."

"During concentration I used to see my own face in the centre of a big light. Sometimes I used to see the faces of my friends. I could clearly recognise them." .... "R."

"I used to feel a current of electricity passing from my Muladhara to the back of the neck when I sat for meditation. Even at ordinary times I used to feel this." .... "K."

"During meditation some astral entities with ghastly hideous faces and long teeth, black in colour used to threaten me. But they did not do any harm." .... "A."

"When I sat for meditation I used to get jerks of the legs and hands. Sometimes my body used to jump from one place to another." .... "M."

"I used to see palatial buildings, rivers, mountains and gardens during my meditation." .... "S."

"I used to meditate with open eyes. One night I saw in front of me a brilliant light. In the centre of the light I saw Lord Krishna with flute in hand. My hair stood on end. I became speechless. I was struck with awe and wonder. It was 3 a.m." .... "S."

"One day I had deep meditation. I separated myself actually from the physical body. I actually saw it as a slough thrown out. I was floating in the air. I had a peculiar sensation of a mixture of extreme joy and extreme fear. I stayed in the air for a couple of minutes only. Owing to great fear I suddenly entered back into the physical body. I slowly glided with a peculiar sensation into the physical body. The experience was thrilling." .... "S."

UDDALAKA'S EXPERIENCE

The sage Uddalaka was not able to master Samadhi which leads one into the blissful realm of Reality, because the monkey-mind jumped speedily from one branch to another sensual objects. He seated himself in Padmasana and uttered Pranava (OM) with high-sounding intonation. Then he started his meditation.

He forcibly controlled his mind. With great difficulty he separated the senses from the objects. He dissociated himself completely from all external objects. He closed the avenues of the body. He fixed his mind on the heart. His mind was freed from all Vikalpas. He destroyed all thoughts of objects just as a warrior kills with his sword his foes who rise against him again and again.

He saw before him a radiant light. He dispelled Moha. He passed through the stage of darkness, light, sleep and Moha. He eventually reached the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and enjoyed perfect calmness. After six months, he woke from his Samadhi. He would spend in one sitting, days, months and even years in deep Samadhi and then wake up.

5. In the Hours of Meditation

Brahman, Self, Purusha, Chaitanya, Consciousness, God, Atman, Immortality, Freedom, Perfection, Peace, Bliss, Bhuma or the Unconditioned, are synonymous terms. If you attain Self-realisation alone, you will be freed from the round of births and deaths and its concomitant evils. The goal of life is the attainment of final beatitude or Moksha. Moksha can be attained by constant meditation in the heart that is rendered pure and steady by selfless service, Japa, etc.

Reality or Brahman can be realised by man. Many have attained Self-realisation. Many have enjoyed the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Sankara, Dattatreya, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Jesus, Buddha were all realised souls who had direct perception of the Truth or cosmic vision or Aparokshanubhuti. But one who has known cannot communicate it to others for want of means. Even the knowledge acquired by the five senses, which are common to all, cannot be communicated to others. You cannot tell the taste of sugarcandy to a man who has never tasted it; you cannot communicate the idea of colour to one born blind. All that the teacher can do is to tell his disciple the method of knowing the Truth or the path that leads to the unfoldment of intuitional faculty.

These are the signs that indicate that you are growing in meditation and approaching God. You will have no attraction for the world. The sensual objects will no longer tempt you. You will become desireless, fearless, 'I'-less and 'mine'-less. Deha-adhyasa or attachment to the body will gradually dwindle. You will not entertain the ideas, "She is my wife; he is my son; this is my house." You will feel that all are manifestations of the Lord. You will behold God in every object.

The body and mind will become light. You will always be cheerful and happy. The name of the Lord will always be on your lips. The mind will be ever fixed on the lotus feet of the Lord. The mind will be ever producing the image of the Lord. It will be ever seeing the picture of the Lord. You will actually feel that Sattva or purity, light, bliss, knowledge and Prema are ever flowing from the Lord to you and filling up your heart.

You will have no body-consciousness. Even if there be body-consciousness, it will be in the form of a mental retentum. A drunkard may not have full consciousness that he has a cloth round his body. He may feel that something is loosely hanging from his body. Even so, you have a feeling of the body. You will feel that something is sticking to you like a loose cloth or loose shoes.

You will have no attraction for the sex. You will have no sex-idea. Woman will appear to you as manifestation of the Lord. Money and gold will appear to you as pieces of stone. You will have intense love for all creatures. You will be absolutely free from lust, greed, anger, jealousy, pride, delusion, etc. You will have peace of mind even when people insult you, beat you and persecute you. The reason why you are not perturbed is that you get immense spiritual strength from the Indweller or the Lord. Pain and pleasure, success or failure, honour or dishonour, respect or disrespect, gain or loss are alike to you.

Even in dreams, you are in communion with the Lord. You will not behold any worldly pictures.

You will converse with the Lord in the beginning. You will see Him in physical form. When your consciousness becomes cosmic, conversation will stop. You will enjoy the language of the silence or the language of the heart. From Vaikhari (vocal speech), you will pass on to Madhyama, Pasyanti and Para (subtle forms of sounds) and eventually you will rest in soundless Omkara or soundless Brahman.

Dispassion and discrimination, serenity, self-restraint, one-pointedness of mind, Ahimsa, Satyam, purity, forbearance, fortitude, patience, forgiveness, absence of anger, spirit of service, sacrifice, love for all, will be your habitual qualities. You will be a cosmic friend and benefactor.

During meditation you will have no idea of time. You will not hear any sound. You will have no idea of the environments. You will forget your name and all sorts of relationship with others. You will enjoy perfect peace and bliss. Gradually you will rest in Samadhi.

Samadhi is an indescribable state. It is beyond the reach of mind and speech. In Samadhi or the superconscious state the meditator loses his individuality and becomes identical with the Supreme Self. He becomes an embodiment of bliss, peace and knowledge. So much only can be said. You have to experience this yourself through constant meditation.

Contentment, unruffled state of the mind, cheerfulness, patience, decrease in the excretions, sweet voice, eagerness and steadiness in the practice of meditation, disgust for worldly prosperity or success and company, desire to remain alone in a quiet room or in seclusion, desire for association with Sadhus and Sannyasins, Ekagrata or one-pointedness of mind are some of the signs which indicate that you are growing in purity, that you are prospering in the spiritual path.

You will hear various kinds of Anahata sounds, of a bell, a kettle drum, thunder, conch, Veena or flute, the humming sound of a bee, etc., during meditation. The mind can be fixed in any of these sounds. This also will lead to Samadhi. You will behold various kinds of colours and lights during meditation. This is not the goal. You will have to merge the mind in that which is the source of these lights and colours.

A student in the path of Vedanta ignores these sounds and lights. He meditates on the significance of the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads by negating all forms. "The sun does not shine there, nor do the moon and the stars, nor does this lightning shine and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all these shine." He meditates, also like this: "The air does not blow there. The fire does not burn there. There is neither sound nor touch, neither smell nor colour, neither mind nor Prana in the homogeneous essence. Asabda, Asparsa, Arupa, Agandha, Aprana, Amana, Atindriya, Adrishya, Chidanandarupa Sivoham, Sivoham. I am blissful Siva, I am blissful Siva."

Be a spiritual hero in the Adhyatmic battlefield. Be a brave, undaunted, spiritual soldier. The inner war with the mind, senses, Vasanas and Samskaras is more terrible than the external war. Fight against the mind, senses, evil Vasanas, Trishnas, Vrittis and Samskaras boldly. Use the machine-gun of Brahma-Vichara to explode the mind efficiently. Dive deep and destroy the undercurrents of passion, greed, hatred, pride and jealousy, through the submarine or torpedo of Japa of OM or Soham. Soar high in the higher regions of bliss of the Self with the help of the aeroplane of Brahmakara Vritti. Use the 'mines' of chanting of OM to explode the Vasanas that are hidden in the sea of subconscious mind. Sometimes move the 'tanks' of discrimination to crush your ten enemies, the ten turbulent senses. Start the Divine League and make friendship with your powerful allies viz., dispassion, fortitude, endurance, serenity, self-restraint, to attack your enemy-mind. Throw the bomb of "Sivoham Bhavana" to destroy the big mansion of body and the idea "I am the body," "I am the doer" and "I am the enjoyer." Spread profusely the gas of "Sattva" to destroy your internal enemies viz., Rajas and Tamas quickly. “Black-out” the mind by destroying the Vrittis or Sankalpas by putting out all the lights or bulbs of sensual objects so that the enemy ‘mind’ will not be able to attack you. Fight closely against your enemy ‘mind’ with the bayonet of one-pointedness (Samadhana) to get hold of the priceless treasure or Atmic pearl. The joy of Samadhi, the bliss of Moksha, the peace of Nirvana are now yours, whoever you may be, in whatever clime you are born. Whatever might be your past life or history, work out your salvation. O beloved Rama, with the help of these means come out victorious right now, this very second.

6. Vision of God

You will sometimes see a vast bright golden light. Within the light you will see your Ishta Devata in front. Sometimes you will see yourself within the light. You will see a golden-coloured light all around.

You may see your Ishta Devata as big as a mountain shining like the sun. You may see the figure during eating, drinking and working. When you enjoy the bliss of this vision, you will experience no taste for food while eating. You will simply swallow the food. You will hear continuous ringing of the Veena. You may see the blazing light of the sun.

The object of your meditation will come before you much quicker if you practise regular meditation. You will feel as if you are covered by the object on which you meditate. You will see as if the whole space is illumined. Sometimes you will experience the sound of ringing bells. You will feel the inner peace of the Soul.

You will see all sorts of beautiful colours. Sometimes you will behold a beautiful garden with charming scenery. Sometimes you will see saints and sages. Full-moon and crescent moon, sun and stars, will appear. You will see light on the wall.

When you get these experiences, when you behold these visions, you will feel peculiar indescribable bliss. Do not get false contentment. Do not stop your Sadhana and meditation thinking that you have attained the highest realisation. Do not attach much importance to these visions. You have attained only the first degree of concentration. The highest goal or realisation is profound Silence or Supreme Peace, wherein all thoughts cease and you become identical with the Supreme Self.

He who does Japa, Pranayama and meditation, feels lightness of the body. Rajas and Tamas are decreased. The body becomes light.

The sudden jerks in meditation come especially when the Prana becomes slow and the outward vibrations make the mind come down from its union with the Lord to the level of physical consciousness.

The mind becomes very subtle by the practice of Japa, Kirtan, meditation and Pranayama. The power of thinking also gets developed.

You will hear the melodious sound of OM during meditation. You will see the form of your Guru.

May you attain this final beatitude or ineffable Brahmic seat of eternal splendour and everlasting bliss through constant meditation!

7. Feeling of Separation

During the course of practice, one day you will feel that you have separated yourself from the body. You will have immense joy mixed with fear, joy in the possession of a new, light, astral body, fear owing to the entry in a foreign, unknown plane. At the very outset, the new consciousness is very rudimentary in the new plane, just as in the case of a pup with newly opened eyes in the eighth or tenth day on the physical plane. You will only feel that you have a light airy body and will perceive a rotating, vibratory limited astral atmosphere with illumination of golden lights, objects, beings, etc. You may feel you are rotating or floating in the air and consequently there is the fear of falling.

You will never fall; but the new experience of subtlety generates novel feelings and sensations in the beginning. How you leave the body, remains unknown at the outset. You are suddenly startled, when you have completely separated, and when you enter into the new plane, sometimes with blue-coloured sphere around, sometimes with partial illumination (Prakasha) mixed with darkness while at other times with extremely brilliant golden, yellow diffused illumination. The new joy is inexpressible and indescribable in words. You will have to actually feel and experience yourself (Anubhava). You will have to eat yourself. You are unaware of how you have left the body, but you are fully conscious of your returning. You gently feel as if you glide on a very smooth surface; as if you enter smoothly, gently through a small whole of fine tube with an airy, light body. You have an airy, ethereal feeling. Just as air enters through the crevices of a window, you enter with the new astral body into the physical body. I think I have expressed the idea lucidly. When you have returned, you can markedly differentiate the life in the gross and subtle planes. There is an intense craving to regain the new consciousness and to remain in that state always. You are not able to stay for a period longer than 3, 5 or 10 minutes in the new region. Further, you can hardly leave the body at will, through simple willing, in the beginning. By chance, through efforts, you are able to separate from the body in a month in the course of Sadhana. If you plod on with patience, perseverance and firmness, you will be able to leave the body at will and stay for a longer time in the new plane with the new subtle body. You are quite safe from the identification with the body. You have made conquest of Deha-Adhyasa, only if you can leave the body at will and only if you are able to stay in the new region for 2 or 3 hours. Your position is quite secure then and not otherwise. Mouna or the vow of silence, solitude, living alone are *sine qua non* to achieve this end. If circumstances prevent you to observe Mouna, strictly avoid long talk, big talk, tall talk, all unnecessary talks, all sorts of vain discussions, etc., and withdraw yourself from society as much as possible. Too much talk is simply wastage of energy. If this energy is conserved by Mouna, it will be transmuted into Ojas or spiritual energy which will help you in the Sadhana. Speech is Tejomaya Vak according to Chhandogya Upanishad. The gross portion of fire goes to constitute bone, the middle portion to form marrow; and the subtle portion of fire to form speech. So speech is a very powerful energy. Remember this, remember this, remember this always. Observe Mouna for 3 months, 6 months or 1 year. If you cannot do for months continuously, observe for a day in a week, just as Sri Mahatma Gandhiji did. You must draw inspiration from Mahatmas like Sri Krishna Ashramji Maharaj who is now living absolutely nude for the last many years in the icy regions of Himalayas, near the origin of the Ganga, Gangotri. He is observing Kashta Mouna, a rigid vow of silence for many years. (In Kashta Mouna you do not communicate your thoughts to others even in writing or by signs). Why not you also become a Krishna Ashram of wide repute and glory? After continuous, hard practice, you will be able to separate yourself from the body, very frequently. There is established a habit. As soon as you silence the thought, and calm the mind, the mental habit of slipping from the physical body supervenes automatically. There is no difficulty then. The mind enters the new groove and appears on a new stage or platform.

ASTRAL JOURNEY

You can simply, by mere willing, travel to any place you like with the astral body (astral travel, astral journey) and there materialise by drawing the necessary materials either from Asmita (Ahamkara) or the universal storehouse—ocean of Tanmatras. The process is very simple to occultists, and Yogins who know the rationale, the detailed technique of the various operations, albeit it seems extraordinary to poor mundane creatures with diverse emotions, passions and attachment. Thought-reading, thought-transference also can be quite easily performed by those who can function with the astral body. Concentrated mental rays can penetrate opaque walls, just as X-rays pass through bones.

MATERIALISATION

You first separate yourself from the body, then you identify yourself with the mind and then you function on the mental plane, with this fine body, just as you do on this earth plane. Through concentration, you rise above body-consciousness; through meditation, you rise above mind; and finally through Samadhi, you become one with Brahman. These are the three important, Antaranga Sadhanas (internal means), in the achievement of final beatitude.

8. Cosmic Consciousness

This exalted, blissful experience comes through intuition or Samadhi. The lower mind is withdrawn from the external, objective world. The senses are abstracted in the mind. The individual mind becomes one with the cosmic mind or Hiranyagarbha or the Oversoul, the Soul of the Universe, the one common thread-soul or Sutratma. The function of the intellect, the objective mind and the senses are suspended. The

Yogi becomes a living soul and sees into the life of things through his new divine eye of intuition or wisdom.

The state of Cosmic Consciousness is grand and sublime. It is beyond description. The mind and speech return from it baffled, as they are not able to grasp and describe it. The language and words are imperfect. It induces awe, Supreme Joy and Highest Unalloyed Felicity, free from pain, sorrow and fear. This is divine experience. It is a revelation of the Karana Jagat, the causal world wherein the types are realised directly.

Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, Vama Deva, Jadabharata, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Madalasa, Yajnavalkya, Ram Das, Tulasi Das, Kabir, Hafiz, Tukaram, Mira, Gouranga, Madhvacharya, Ramanujacharya, Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha, Lord Mohammed, Lord Zoroaster, had experience of Cosmic Consciousness.

The Yogi who has experience of Cosmic Consciousness acquires all Divine Aishvaryas. He attains many kinds of Siddhis or powers, which are described in Srimad Bhagavata and Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi.

Arjuna, Sanjaya and Yasoda had the experience of Cosmic Consciousness. Yasoda saw the whole universe within the mouth of Bala Krishna.

The Gita describes the state of cosmic consciousness through the mouth of Arjuna in these words: "Thy mighty form with many mouths and eyes, long-armed, with thighs and feet innumerable, vast-bosomed, set with many fearful teeth, radiant, Thou touchest heaven, rainbow-hued, with open mouths and shining vast-orbed eyes on every side, all-swallowing, fiery-tongued, Thou lickest up mankind devouring all into Thy gaping mouths, which are tremendous-toothed and terrible to see. Some caught within the gaps between Thy teeth, are seen with their heads to powder crushed and ground."

In France, Professor Bergson preached about intuition which transcends reason but did not contradict it.

This new experience bestows new enlightenment which places the experiencer on a new plane of existence. There is an indescribable feeling of elation and indescribable joy and Bliss. He experiences a sense of universality, a Consciousness of Eternal Life. It is not a mere conviction. He actually feels it. He gets the eye Celestial.

The Jivahood has gone now. The little 'I' has melted. The differentiating mind that splits up has vanished. All barriers, all sense of duality, differences, separateness have disappeared. There is no idea of time and space. There is only eternity. The ideas of caste, creed and colour have gone now. He has the feeling of Apta-Kama (one who has obtained all that he desires). He feels, "There is nothing more to be known by me." He feels perfect awareness of superconscious plane of Knowledge and intuition. He knows the whole secret of Creation. He is Omniscient. He is a Sarva-Vit or Knower of all details of Creation.

Absolute fearlessness, desirelessness, thoughtlessness, I-lessness, mine-lessness, angerlessness, Brahmic aura in the face, freedom from Harsha and Shoka are some of the signs that indicate that the man has reached the state of superconsciousness. He is also always in a state of perfect bliss. You can never see anger, depression, cheerlessness and sorrow in his face. You will find elevation, joy and peace in his presence.

Cosmic consciousness is perfect awareness of the oneness of life. The Yogi feels that the universe is filled with one life. He actually feels that there is no such thing as blind force or dead matter and that all is alive, vibrating and intelligent. This is the experience of scientist Bose also. He has demonstrated it through laboratory experiements.

He who has cosmic consciousness feels that the universe is all his. He is one with the Supreme Lord. He is one with the Universal knowledge and Life. He experiences bliss and joy beyond understanding and description. In the moment of illumination or great spiritual exaltation he has the actual divine universal vision. He is conscious of being in the presence of God. He sees the light of God's countenance. He is lifted above the ordinary plane of consciousness. He reaches a higher state of consciousness. He has a cosmic or universal understanding. He has developed the cosmic sense. The human soul is revolutionised.

He does not worry about death or future, about what may come after the cessation of the life of the present body. He is one with Eternity, Infinity and Immortality!

During illumination the floodgate of joy breaks. The Yogi is inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Bliss, Immortality, Eternity, Truth, Divine Love become the core of his being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality. He realises that the deep, everlasting fountain of joy exists in every heart, that the immortal life underlies all beings, that this eternal, all-embracing, all-inclusive love envelops, supports and guides every particle, every atom of creation. Sin, sorrow, death are but words now for him without meaning. He feels that the elixir of life, the nectar of immortality is flowing in his veins.

He feels no need for food or sleep. He is absolutely desireless. There is a great change in his appearance and manner. His face shines with a radiant light. His eyes are lustrous. They are pools of joy and bliss. He feels that the entire world is bathed in a sea of satisfying love, or immortal bliss which is the very essence of life.

The whole world is home to him. He could never feel strange or alien to any place. The mountains, the distant lands which he has never seen would be as much as his own, as the home of his boyhood. He feels that the whole world is his body. He feels that all hands, all feet are his.

Fatigue is unknown to him. His work is like child's play, happy and care-free. He beholds only God everywhere. Chair, table, tree have a Cosmic significance. His breath will stop completely sometimes. He experiences Absolute Peace. Time and space vanish.

Cosmic Consciousness is an inherent, natural faculty of all men and women. Training and discipline are necessary to awaken the consciousness. It is already present in man. It is inactive, or non-functioning in the majority of human beings on account of the force of Avidya or ignorance.

May you all attain the State of Cosmic Consciousness, your birthright, centre, ideal and goal, through association with the sages, purity, love, devotion and Knowledge!

9. Blissful Experience

Samadhi or blissful divine experience arises when the ego and the mind are dissolved. It is a state to be attained by one's own effort. It is limitless, divisionless and infinite, an experience of being and of pure consciousness. When this experience is realised, the mind, desires, actions and feelings of joy and sorrow vanish into a void.

The ultimate Truth or Brahman or the Absolute can be experienced by all persons by regular practice of meditation with a pure heart. Mere abstract reasoning and study of books will not do. What is wanted is direct experience. The direct experience is the source for higher intuitional knowledge or divine wisdom. This experience is superconscious or transcendental. There is neither the play of the senses nor the intellect here. This is not an emotional experience. The senses, mind and intellect are at perfect rest. They do not function a bit. This experience is not an imaginary experience of a visionary dreamer. It is not a reverie. It is not a hypnotic trance. It is a solid living Truth like the Amalaka fruit on the palm of your hand. The third eye or the eye of wisdom (Jnana Chakshus) is opened in the experiencer. The extraordinary experience comes from cognition through the spiritual eye or the eye of intuition. This eye of wisdom can be opened when the senses, mind and intellect cease functioning. The Jnana Chakshus can only be opened by eradicating completely all desires, wrath, greed, pride, egoism and hatred.

There is neither darkness nor void in this experience. It is all light. There is neither sound nor touch nor form here. It is a magnanimous experience of unity or oneness. There is neither time nor causation here. You become omniscient and omnipotent. You become a Sarvavit or all-knower. You know everything in detail. You know the whole mystery of creation. You get immortality, higher knowledge and eternal bliss.

All dualities vanish here. There is neither subject nor object. There is neither Sakara nor Nirakara. There is neither meditation nor Samadhi. There is neither Dvaita nor Advaita. There is neither Vikshepa nor one-pointedness. There is neither meditator nor the meditated. There is neither gain nor loss. There is neither pleasure nor pain. There is neither East nor West. There is neither day nor night.

Samadhi is of various kinds. The Samadhi that is induced by the practice of Mudra and Pranayama (Kumbhaka) is Jada Samadhi. There is no awareness here. The Yogi can be buried for six months in a box beneath the earth. It is like deep sleep. The Yogi does not return with superintuitional knowledge. The

Vasanas are not destroyed by this Samadhi. The Yogi will be born again. This Samadhi cannot give liberation.

Then there is the Chaitanya Samadhi. The Yogi has perfect awareness. He comes down with divine knowledge. He gives inspired talks and messages. The hearers are much elevated. The Vasanas are destroyed by this Samadhi. The Yogi attains Kaivalya or perfect freedom.

The Samadhi experienced by a Bhakta is Bhava Samadhi. The devotee attains the state through Bhava and Mahabhava. The Raja Yogi gets Nirodha Samadhi through destruction of Sankalpas (Chittavrittinirodha). The Vedantin attains Bhava Samadhi through negation of the illusory vehicles, or Upadhis such as body, mind, senses, intellect, etc. For him the world and body are unreal or Mithya. He passes through the stages of darkness, light, sleep, Moha and infinite space and eventually attain infinite consciousness.

Again there are two other varieties of Samadhi, viz., Savikalpa or Sabija or Samprajnata and Nirvikalpa or Nirbija or Asamprajnata Samadhi. In the first variety there is Triputi or the triad, viz., knower, knowledge, knowable or seer, sight and seen. The Samskaras are not destroyed. In the latter the Samskaras are totally fried or destroyed. There is no Triputi in Nirvikalpa. Savikalpa, Nirvichara, Saananda are varieties of Savikalpa Samadhi.

When you are established in the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi you have nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to smell and nothing to feel. You have no body-consciousness. You have full Brahmic Consciousness only. There is nothing but the Self. It is a grand experience. You will be struck with awe and wonder.

A Bhakta who meditates on the form of Lord Krishna will see Krishna and Krishna only everywhere when he is established in Samadhi. All other forms will disappear. This is one kind of spiritual experience. He will see himself also as Krishna. Gopis of Brindavan, Gauranga and Ekanath had this experience. Those who meditate on the all-pervading Krishna will have another kind of cosmic experience. Arjuna had this kind of experience. He had consciousness of the whole Virat. He had cosmic consciousness.

If you meditate on Hiranyagarbha, you will become identical with Hiranyagarbha. You will have knowledge of Brahmaloka. You will also have cosmic consciousness. The experience of Savikalpa Samadhi of a devotee and Raja Yogi is the same.

The transcendental experience is also called by the name Turiya or the fourth state. The first three states are 'waking,' 'dreaming' and 'dreamless sleep' and the fourth state is 'Turiya.' The first three states are common to all. The fourth is latent in every human being. When you are established in the fourth state, when you experience the transcendental state of Brahmic consciousness, the Truth, which had been before but as an intellectual abstraction, becomes a living reality definitely experienced by you.

Various names such as Samyag Darshan, Sahaja Avastha, Nirvana, Turiyatita, Aparokshanubhava, Brahma-Sakshatkara, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi, are given to this transcendental state, but all of them unmistakably point to the same goal. Real spiritual life begins after one enters into this state of superconsciousness.

You will realise at all times and under all circumstances that you are identical with the invisible existence, knowledge and bliss; that you pervade all persons and objects; and that you are beyond all limitations. If you have the knowledge of the Self or Brahman at all times without any break, then you are established in the Self. This is a state to be experienced within but cannot be expressed in words. This is the final state of Peace, the goal of life. This experience will give you freedom from all forms of bondage.

Some aspirants mistake 'deep sleep state' and the state of Tandri or 'half sleep' state for Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is a terrible mistake. If you experience Samadhi of any kind, you will have supersensual knowledge. If you do not possess any intuitional knowledge, be sure that you are far from Samadhi. You can experience Samadhi only when you are established in Yama, Niyama or Sadachara and when you have a very pure heart. How can the Lord be enthroned in an impure heart? Samadhi comes only after constant and protracted practice of meditation. Samadhi is not a commodity that can be obtained easily. Those who can really enter into Samadhi are very, very rare.

In Samadhi or Superconsciousness the Yogic practitioner gets himself merged in the Lord. The senses, the mind and the intellect cease functioning. Just as the river joins the ocean, the individual soul mixes with the Supreme Soul. All limitations and differences disappear. The Yogi attains the highest knowledge and eternal bliss. This state is beyond description. You will have to realise this yourself.

Taste the immortal sweetness of the beautiful life in the Self within. Live in Atman and attain the blessed immortal State. Meditate and reach the deeper depths of eternal life, the higher heights of divine glory and eventually attain the full glory of union with the Supreme Self. Now your long wearisome journey terminates. You have reached your destination, your sweet original home of everlasting peace, the Param Dham.

10. Mind Moves

After a short practice of meditation you will feel that body gets lighter in a short time, say 15 or 30 minutes after you have taken your seat in Padma, Siddha or Sukhasana, according to taste and temperament. You may be semi-conscious of the body also. There is great deal of happiness owing to concentration. This is happiness resulting from concentration—concentration-Ananda—which is quite different from sensual pleasures. You must be able to differentiate these two pleasures through the Buddhi, rendered subtle by constant Abhyasa, meditation. Dharana and Dhyana have a power to sharpen the intellect. A trained Buddhi can comprehend subtle, philosophical, abstruse problems beautifully well. A disciplined Buddhi that can carefully differentiate concentration-Ananda and Nididhyasana-happiness, will naturally run daily to enjoy this kind of new happiness, Vasana-Ananda. Such a mind will loathe sensual pleasures. There will be extreme abhorrence, and positive aversion to objects. It is but natural, because this kind of happiness is more lasting, sustained, self-contained and real, as it emanates from Atman. You can distinctly feel that the mind is moving, that it is leaving its seat in the brain and that it is trying to go to its Yathasthana (original seat). You know that it has left its old groove and is now passing the new groove in the avenue. As a result of meditation, new channels are formed in the brain, new thought-currents are generated and new brain-cells are formed. There is a transformed psychology altogether. You have got a new brain, a new heart, new feelings, new sentiments and new sensations.

11. Bhuta-Ganas

Sometimes, these elementals appear during meditation. They are strange figures, some with long teeth, some with big faces, some with big bellies, some with faces on the belly, some with faces on the head. They are inhabitants of the Bhuta Loka. They are Bhutas. They are supposed to be the attendants of Lord Siva. They have terrifying forms. They do not cause any harm at all. They simply appear on the stage. They come to test your strength and courage. They can do nothing. They cannot stand before a pure, ethical aspirant. Repetition of a few Omkaras will throw them at a distance. You must be fearless. A coward is absolutely unfit for the spiritual line. Develop courage by constantly feeling you are the Atman. Negate the body-idea that is inveterate. Practise, practise, Nididhyasana, Nididhyasana always, all the 24 hours. That is the secret. That is the key. That is the master-key to open the treasury of Sat-Chit-Ananda. That is the corner-stone of the edifice of Bliss. That is the pillar of the edifice of Bliss. That is the pillar of the mansion of Ananda. Vinayakas are types of elementals.

12. Glimpses of the Self

By experiences, pleasant and painful, man gathers materials and builds them into mental and moral faculties.

As a merchant closing the year's ledger and opening a new one does not enter in the new one all the items of the old but only its balances, so does the spirit hand over to the new brain his judgments on the experiences of a life that is closed, the conclusion to which he has come, the decisions to which he has arrived. This is the stock handed over to the new life, the mental furniture for the new dwelling, a real memory.

The mind which ever rises and falls with the ebb of desires, fancies this illusory universe to be true through its ignorance; but it should be informed of the real nature of this world, then it will cognise it to be Brahman itself.

During meditation you may experience that you are rising from your seat. Some experience that they fly in the air.

Various persons get various spiritual experiences. There cannot be a common experience for all. It depends upon the temperament, mode of Sadhana, place of concentration, and various other factors. Some hear melodious sounds in the ears. Some see lights. Some get Ananda (spiritual bliss). Some get both Prakasha and Ananda.

If there is any error in Sadhana (meditation), at once consult the senior Sannyasins or realised souls and remove the mistake. If your general health is sound, if you are cheerful, happy and strong physically and mentally, if the mind is peaceful and unruffled, if you get Ananda in meditation and if your will is growing strong, pure and irresistible, think that you are improving in meditation and everything is going on all right.

The Divine Light comes not through open doors but only through narrow slits. The aspirant sees the ray as a sunbeam passing through a chink into a dark room. It is like a "flash of lightning." This sudden illumination chokes all sounds of words. The aspirant is spellbound in ecstasy and awe. He trembles with love and awe, just as Arjuna did when he had the Visvarupa Darshan of Lord Krishna. So bright and glorious is the Light environing the Divine that the initiate is dazzled and bewildered.

This is a kind of vision one occasionally gets during meditation. You may behold a dazzling light with abrupt motion. You may behold a head of marvellous form, of the colour of a flame, red as fire, and very awful to look at. It has three wings of marvellous length and breadth, white as a dazzling cloud. At times they would beat terribly and again would be still. The head never utters a word, but remains altogether still. Now and again there is beating with its extended wings.

During meditation the colour of lights that you see varies according to the nature of Tattva that flows through the nostrils. If there is Agni Tattva you will see red-coloured lights. If Akasa Tattva flows you will have blue-coloured lights. If Apas Tattva (water) prevails you will see white-coloured lights. If there is Prithivi Tattva you will have yellow lights. If there is Vayu Tattva you will see black colour. You can change the Tattva by various ways. But the best way is by thought. "As you think, so you also become." When the Agni Tattva flows, think intensely of Apas Tattva. Apas Tattva will begin to flow soon.

If you get experiences of the glimpses of Self during intense meditation, if you see a blazing light during meditation, and if you get spiritual visions of angels, archangels, Rishis, Munis, Devatas and any other extraordinary spiritual experiences, do not fall back in terror. Do not mistake them for phantoms. Do not give up the Sadhana. Plod on diligently. Break veil after veil.

March on boldly. Do not look back. Cross the intense void and darkness. Pierce the layer of Moha. Melt the subtle Ahamkara now. Svarupa will shine by itself. You will experience the Turiya (Arudha state).

Sometimes bad spirits will trouble you. They may have ugly fierce faces with long teeth. Drive them with your strong will. Give the word of command "Get out." They will go away. They are vampires. They are elementals. They will not do any harm to the Sadhakas. Your courage will be tested here. If you are timid you cannot march further. Draw power and courage from Atman within, the inexhaustible source (Avyaya). You will come across very good spirits also. They will help you a lot in your onward march. These are all Vighnas or obstacles in the way.

Aspirants are eager to get spiritual experience soon. As soon as they get them, they are afraid. They are awfully alarmed when they go above body-consciousness. They entertain a passing wonder whether they will come back again or not. Why should they be afraid at all? It does not matter much whether they return to body-consciousness or not. All our attempts are mainly directed towards getting over this body-consciousness and being one with the higher spiritual consciousness. We are used to certain limitations. When these limitations suddenly drop away we feel that there is no definite base left to stand upon. That is the reason why we are afraid when we go above the body-consciousness. That is a novel experience. Courage is needed. Courage is an indispensable requisite. Sruti says: *"Nayamatma Balahinena Labhyah."* This Atman can hardly be attained by weak (timid) persons. All sorts of forces have to be encountered on the way. A dacoit or an anarchist can easily realise God because he is fearless. A push in the right direction is only necessary for him. How Jagai and Madhai, rogues of the first water, became very good saints? They pelted stones at Nityananda, the disciple of Lord Gauranga. Nityananda won them by pure divine love. Dacoit Ratnakara became sage Valmiki.

13. Jyotirmaya Darshan

When you advance in meditation you can see your Ishta Devata in physical form. Lord Vishnu will give you Darshan with four hands; Lord Krishna will appear before you with flute in His hands; Rama with bow and arrow in his hands; Lord Siva with trident and Damaru.

Sometimes the Lord will come before you in the form of a beggar or sick man with dirty rags. He may appear before you in the form of a coolie or a man of low caste. You must have the keen sense to detect Him. Your hair will stand on end when you meet Him.

He appears in your dreams. Lord Ganesha comes in the form of an elephant in dreams. Devi appears in the form of a girl in your dreams.

During deep meditation you will have Jyotirmaya Darshan. You will behold a huge pillar of light. You will see infinite light and you will merge yourself in it. You will be struck with awe and wonder.

If you worship Lord Krishna intensely and constantly, you will see only Lord Krishna everywhere.

A Yogi should always avoid fear, anger, laziness, too much sleep or waking and too much food and fasting. If the above rule be well and strictly practised each day, spiritual wisdom will arise of itself in three months without doubt. In four months, he sees the Devas; in five months, he knows (or becomes) Brahmanishtha and truly in six months attains Kaivalya at will. There is no doubt.

APPENDIX

Concentration Tests

Tiruvalluvar, a Tamil Saint of South India, one day put on the head of his wife a shallow plate containing water, and asked her to move along a procession of dance, music and variety of plays, with instructions that her head would be cut off, if a single drop of water should fall to the ground. The procession started from the front door of the grand temple of Srirangam, Trichinopoly. Tiruvalluvar's wife accompanied the procession with the plate of water on the head. Her whole Prana, full mind, complete heart, her full being, were all perfectly centred on the plate of water. The procession marched through the 4 streets 3 times and at last terminated at the front gate wherefrom it had commenced. The woman managed to bring back the plate of water in entirely without allowing a single drop to fall on the ground. Tiruvalluvar asked his wife "O Sarasvati Devi, did you hear the band, the music and play of the flute that accompanied the procession?" She said, "No." "Did you see the fire-works?" She said, "No." "Where was the mind, then?" She said, "My Lord, it was all on the plate of water. I knew nothing, nothing. I heard nothing, nothing. I saw nothing, nothing. I thought nothing, nothing. I had one strong concentrated idea of the plate of water only."

"Now look here, Sarasvati, that must be the condition of your mind during meditation also. It is termed Ekagrata, one-pointedness. There must be undivided attention, undivided energy, everything being centred upon God. Then only you will see God. You will dwell in God."

Story of Arjuna

(DEXTEROUS ARCHERY)

(Drona tested the power of concentration of the Pandavas. A basin of water was placed on the ground. A bird was being rotated above. The archer should shoot at the bird by looking at the reflection in the water.)

Drona: "O Yudhishthira, what do you see?"

Yudhishthira: "O Acharya, I see the bird to be aimed at, the tree on which the bird is sitting and I see yourself also."

Drona: "What do you see, Bhima?"

Bhima: "I see the bird, the tree, yourself, Nakula, Sahadeva, the tables and chairs, etc."

Drona: What do you see, Nakula?"

Nakula: "I see, the bird, the tree, yourself, Arjuna, Bhima, the garden, the streamlet, etc."

Drona: "What do you see, Sahadeva?"

Sahadeva: "I see the bird to be aimed at, yourself, Arjuna, Bhima, Yudhishthira, the horses, carriages, all the lookers on, several cows, etc."

Drona: "Now then, Arjuna, what do you see?"

Arjuna: "O Revered Guru! I see nothing but the bird to be aimed at."

You must have the one-pointed (Ekagrata) concentration of Arjuna for purposes of meditation by removing Vikshepa (tossing of the mind) through Upasana of Yoga. Trataka and Pranayama are other aids to develop concentration.

Suka Deva

Sri Suka Deva, son of Sri Vyasa, was not satisfied with the answers given by his father to his certain philosophical questions. Sri Vyasa sent his son to Raja Janaka of Mithila.

Suka Deva was waiting at the gate of the palace of Janaka for three days without taking any food. Janaka wanted to test Suka Deva whether he had balanced mind and equal vision. After three days Suka Deva was taken to the harem and given palatable dishes and dainties. Several ladies served him. He was neither depressed by his being kept at the gate without food and attendance nor elated by the royal treatment within the harem. He had the same balanced mind on the two different occasions.

Then Janaka wanted to test Suka Deva's power of concentration. He gave him a cup which contained oil to the very brim and asked him to take this cup round the Mithila city and bring it back without allowing a drop to fall on the ground.

Janaka arranged for musical and dancing parties all round the city.

Suka Deva took the cup in his hand and brought it back without allowing even a drop of oil to fall on the ground, as he had intense concentration and abstraction of the senses. He was not a bit attracted by external sounds and objects, as he was well-established in Pratyahara. His mind was ever fixed on the cup of oil.

You must have the same power of concentration as that of Suka Deva.

The Arrow-Maker

An arrow-maker was very busy in making the arrows. He was wholly absorbed in his work. He had intense concentration. Once a king and his party passed in front of his workshop. As his mind was wholly absorbed in his work, he did not notice at all the party of the king and his retinue. You must be endowed with the same power of concentration at that of the arrow-maker.

Lord Dattatreya learnt concentration of mind from the arrow-maker. He took him as one of his Gurus.

Having controlled the breath and practised firmness in seat, you should, like the archer, take your aim, fix or centre the mind on the Supreme Self. The mind should be entirely absorbed in the object of contemplation. Having your mind entirely absorbed in the Atman, you will not see anything else at that time, inside or outside, just as the arrow-maker with his mind absorbed in making the arrow did not see the king passing by his side.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon Bonaparte was a man of great concentration. His success was all due to the power of concentration. He suffered from various diseases such as epileptic fits, brody cardia or slowness of heart's action, etc. But for these maladies, he would have proved still more wonderful and powerful. He could sleep at any time he liked. He would snore the very moment he retired to bed. He would get up to the very hour, nay to the very second. This is a kind of Siddhi. He had, as it were, different pigeon-holes in the brain, just as they have in post offices, pigeon holes for sorting letters. He had no Vikshepa, or shilly-shallying. He had highly developed Ekagra Chitta, one-pointed mind, of a Yogi. He could draw, as it were, any single thought, from the brain pigeon hole, dwell on it as long as he liked, and could shove it back when finished. He would sleep very soundly at night amidst busy war, would never worry a bit at night. This was all due to his power of concentration. He never acquired these powers either by Trataka practice or "target shooting." He was a born Siddha in one sense—Yoga Bhrashta, fallen from Yoga practices during the previous birth.

Law of Association

When you go for an evening walk to Lawrence Garden, you meet daily two college boys. Henry and Thomas. One day you see Henry only. Thomas does not turn up. As soon as you see Henry, the image of Thomas comes in your mind through the law of association.

When you think of river Ganga, you may think of Yamuna and Godavari. When you think of rose, you may think of Jasmine. When you think of apple you may think of mango. This is the law of association.

You can develop your memory through association of ideas and objects. "Pav" means quarter in Hindi language. Keep the letter image P-A-V in your mind. You can remember easily the three limbs of Navavidha Bhakti, viz., Padasevana, Archana and Vandana, which begin with the letters P-A-V. Similarly you can link various ideas in your mind through letter images and word images. Those who have cultivated this habit in this birth are endowed with very good, retentive memory.

If you can carefully watch the mind-wanderings, you will find that there is an intimate connection between one idea and another though the mind wildly wanders about like an unchained monkey. The law of association operates always though the links are broken. The mind may think of a book, then the bookstall wherefrom Mr. John purchased it, then the friend whom he met at the railway station when he was purchasing the book, then of the railways and of the directors of the railways who lived in London. The thought of London may bring in the idea of skating. From skating it may jump to Alps. It may think of pine trees, sanatorium and open air treatment. The thought of a pine tree will bring in the remembrance of Almora in India and its vicinity where pine trees grow. The thought of Almora will bring in the thought of Swami Vivekananda who founded the Advaita Ashram at Mayavati near Almora. It may entertain some Divine ideas of concentration and meditation, and of Advaita Brahman. Then suddenly it may drop into sensual grooves. It may think of the prostitutes in Almora. It will entertain lustful thoughts.

All these will take place within the twinkling of an eye. The mind works and moves in a tremendous speed that is impossible to imagine. It catches one object and fabricates one idea and through association, it leaves this object and this idea and jumps to another object and another idea. There is a sort of concentration all throughout its wanderings, though the concentration is not a continuous one.

GLOSSARY

A

ABHANGA: A devotional poetic composition.
ABHASA: Reflection.
ABHYASA: Practice.
ACHARYA: Teacher; Preceptor.
ACHYUTA: Immutable—Lord Vishnu.
ADESA: Command.
ADHISHTHANA: Substratum.
ADHYASA: Mutual identification or superimposition.
ADHYATMIC: Spiritual.
ADRISYA: Unperceived by the eye.
ADVAITA: Non-dual; Non-duality.
AGANDHA: Without smell.
AGASTYA MUNI: Name of a sage.
AGNI: Fire.
AHAM: 'I' or ego.
AHAM BRAHMA ASMI: 'I am Brahman.'
AHAMGRAHA: A kind of meditation in which the aspirant identifies himself with Brahman.
AHAMKARA: Ego; Pure Ego.
AHIMSA: Non-violence.
AISVARYA: Divine attributes like wisdom, renunciation, power, etc.
AITAREYA: Name of an Upanishad.
AJAPA: Repetition of "Soham" Mantra.
AJNA: Spiritual centre between the two eyebrows.
AJNANA: Ignorance.
AKASA: Ether.
AKHANDA: Indivisible.
AKHOW: Name of a sage.
ALAMBANA: Support.
ALASYA: Laziness.
ALPA: Little; Small.
AMALAKA: The Indian gooseberry.
AMANA: Mindless; Thoughtless.

AMATRA: Having no measure; Transcendental.
AMRITATVA: Immortality.
ANAHATA: Mystic sound heard by Yogis.
ANAHATA CHAKRA: One of the Yogic centres (heart).
ANANDA: Bliss.
ANANDAGHANA: Mass of Bliss.
ANANTA: Endless.
ANANTANAG: Name of a place.
ANARTHA: Evil; Wrong; Calamity.
ANATMA: Not-Self.
ANGA: A limb; A part.
ANTAHKARANA: Internal instrument such as mind, intellect, ego and the subconscious mind.
ANTARANGA: Internal.
ANTARJYOTIS: Inner light.
ANTARMUKHA: Introspective; Gaze turned inwards.
ANTARYAMIN: Inner ruler.
ANUBHAVA: Experience.
APANA VAYU: Down-going breath; The nerve-current which governs abdominal region and does excretory function.
APAROKSHA: Immediate.
APAS: Water.
APRANA: Without Prana (life-breath).
APTA-KAMA: One whose desires have been fulfilled; a realised sage.
ARANI: A sacrificial wood.
ARCHANA: Offering of flowers etc., at the time of worship.
ARJAVA: Straightforwardness.
ARJUNA: Name of a great devotee of Krishna, who was taught the Gita; one of the Pandava brothers.
ARTHA: Wealth.
ARUDHA: Ascended; in a state of culmination; established.
ARUNDHATI: Name of a star.
ARUPA: Formless.
ASABDA: Soundless.
ASAMPRAJNATA: Highest superconscious state where the mind is completely annihilated and Reality experienced.
ASANA: A bodily pose or posture.
ASANA JAYA: Mastery over Asana.
ASANGOHAM: 'I am unassociated'; a formula for meditation.
ASHRAM: A hermitage; monastery.
ASHTANGA: Eight limbs.

ASMITA: Pure ego; self-consciousness.
ASPARSA: Touchless.
ASURA: Demon.
ASUYA: Jealousy.
ASVATTHA: The sacred peepal tree.
ASVINI MUDRA: A kind of Hatha Yoga practice.
ATHARVANA: Name of a Veda; name of a sage.
ATINDRIYA: Beyond the reach of the senses.
ATMAN: The Self.
ATMADROHA: Enmity with the Self.
ATMAHANA: Killer of the Self.
ATMIC-TRIVENI: The Soul compared to Triveni (Triveni is a sacred confluence of three rivers).
ATRI: Name of a sage.
AUM: Sacred monosyllable; symbol of Brahman.
AUROBINDO: Name of the famous sage of Pondicherry.
AVADHANA: Attention.
AVADHUTA GITA: A book containing the teachings of sage Dattatreya.
AVASTHA: State.
AVATARA: Incarnation of God.
AVIDYA: Ignorance.
AVIRATI: Non-dispassion; sensual indulgence.
AVYAKTA: Unmanifest—three Gunas (qualities born of nature) in a state of equilibrium.
AVYAYA: Inexhaustible.

B

BADARAYANA: Name of the author of the Brahma-Sutras.
BAHIRANGA: External.
BAHIRMUKHA: Outgoing; inclined towards outward consciousness.
BALA: Strength.
BALA KRISHNA: Child Krishna.
BALI: Name of a demon king who attained wisdom.
BANDHA: A kind of Hatha Yoga practice.
BENARES: A holy pilgrimage centre of Hindus, now called Varanasi in U.P., India.
BHAGA-TYAGA: A logical method adopted to establish the identity of Jiva (soul) and Isvara (God) by partly abandoning their surface attributes.

BHAGAVAD-GITA: A scripture containing Lord Krishna's teachings.
BHAGAVATA: Name of a Purana (sacred work dealing with the doctrines of creation, etc.).
BHAJAN: Devotional song.
BHAKTA: Devotee of God.
BHANJANA: Breaking.
BHARTRIHARI: Name of a sage.
BHAVA(NA): Feeling; mental attitude.
BHAVA SAMADHI: Superconscious state attained by intense divine emotions.
BHEDANA: Piercing.
BHIKSHA: Alms.
BHIMA: Name of a Pandava (Arjuna's brother).
BHRANTI-DARSANA: Mistaken notion.
BHRUMADHYA: Between the two eyebrows.
BHUJANGASANA: Cobra pose of Hatha Yoga.
BHUMA: Unconditioned Bliss.
BHUMIKA: Stage.
BHUTA-GANAS; BHUTAS: Elementals.
BHUTA-LOKA: The world of elements.
BIMBA: A kind of fruit.
BINDU: Point which denotes 'n' or 'm' vowel sounds in Sanskrit.
BRAHMA: Creator.
BRAHMACHARYA: Practice of celibacy.
BRAHMA-CHINTANA: Constant meditation on Brahman.
BRAHMAKARA VRITTI: The sole ultimate thought of Brahman to the exclusion of all other thoughts.
BRAHMA-LOKA: The world of Brahma.
BRAHMA-MUHURTA: Period from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m.
BRAHMAN: Absolute.
BRAHMASAMSTHA: Grounded in Brahman.
BRAHMA-SUTRAS: Classical Vedantic scripture.
BRAHMAVARCHAS: Magnetic Brahmic aura.
BRAHMAVID: A knower of Brahman.
BRIHADARANYAKA: Name of an Upanishad.
BUDDHA: Name of Siddhartha Gautama after he attained illumination; the Founder of Buddhism.
BUDDHI: Intellect.
BUTI: Herb.

C

CHAITANYA: Pure Consciousness.
CHAKRAS: Centres of energy in the human system.
CHAKSHUS: Eye.
CHANCHALA: Unsteady; fickle.
CHANDIPATHA: Hymns in the praise of Goddess Chandi.
CHARANAMRITA: Nectar of the feet; water sanctified by the feet of a holy man.
CHAKRA: Spinning wheel.
CHELA: Disciple.
CHESHMASHAI: Name of a place in India.
CHHANDOGYA: Name of an Upanishad.
CHIDAKASA: The ether of Pure Consciouseness; Unbounded Intelligence; Brahman.
CHINI-CHINI: Sound of tinklets.
CHINMATRA: Consciousness alone.
CHINTA: Sorrow; worry.
CHINTAMANI: Wish-yielding gem.
CHINTANA: Thinking; reflecting.
CHITTA: Mind-stuff; subconscious mind.

D

DAIVI: Divine.
DAMA: Control of senses.
DAMARU: A sort of small drum in the hand of Lord Siva.
DARJEELING: Name of a place in Bengal, India.
DARSANA: Vision.
DATTATREYA: An ancient sage.
DEHA: Body.
DEVAS: Gods.
DEVATA: Deity.
DEVI: Goddess.
DHANURASANA: Bow pose of Hatha Yoga.
DHARANA: Concentration.
DHARMAS: Characteristics.
DRIDHA SUSHUPTI: Deep sleep.
DHRITI: Firmness; (spiritual) patience.
DHVANI: Sound.
DHYANA: Meditation.
DHYANABINDU UPANISHAD: Name of an Upanishad.

DHYATA: Meditator.
DHYEYA: Object of meditation.
DIG-VIJAYA: Conquest of the quarters (world) either military or cultural.
DINACHARYA: Daily activity.
DIRGHA: Prolonged.
DIVYA: Divine.
DRIK: Seer.
DRISHTI: Seeing.
DRISYA: Seen.
DRONA, DRONACHARYA: Teacher of the Pandavas and Kauravas.
DURBAR: Court of a king.
DVAITA: Dualism.
DVARAKA: Name of a place in India.
DVESHA: Repulsion; hatred; dislike.

E

EKA: One.
EKADASI: Eleventh day of the Hindu lunar fortnight.
EKAGRA: One-pointed.
EKAGRATA: One-pointedness of mind.
EKANATH: Name of a saint.
EKARUPA: Uniform.
EKARASA: Homogeneous.

F

FAKIRS: Muslim and Sufi saints.

G

GADA: Mace.
GANDHA: Fragrance.
GANDHARVA: Being of the psychic plane.
GANESA: Name of the deity of the remover of obstacles; first-worshipped god.
GANGA: River Ganges.
GARUDA: A bird.
GAUDAPADA: Name of a sage.
GAURANGA: Name of a saint.
GAYATRI: One of the most sacred Vedic Mantras; goddess.

GHANA: Mass.
GHRINA: Hatred.
GITA: Renowned sacred text "Bhagavad-Gita."
GOPIS: Girl devotees of Lord Krishna.
GRIHASTHA: Householder.
GUDA: Anus.
GUHA: Cave.
GUJARAT: Name of a state in India.
GULKAND: A confection of roses.
GUNA: Quality born of nature.
GUNATITA: Beyond the Gunas (quality of nature).
GURU: Teacher; preceptor.

H

HANUMAN: A monkey devotee of Lord Rama.
HARI: Lord Vishnu.
HARIJANS: The untouchable class.
HARSHA: Exhileration; joy.
HATHA YOGI: One who practises Hatha Yoga or one who is adept in it.
HIRANYAGARBHA: Cosmic mind.
HRIDAYA: Heart.

I

IDAM: This.
INDRA: The Lord of gods; the ruler of heaven.
INDRIYAS: Senses.
IRSHYA: Jealousy.
ISA: Name of an Upanishad.
ISHTA-DEVATA: Chosen or tutelary deity.
ISHTA MANTRA: The Mantra of the chosen or tutelary deity.
ISVARA: Lord; God.

J

JADA: Inert; insentient.
JAGAI: Name of a saint.
JAGAT: World.
JAGRAT: Waking state.
JANAKA: Name of a royal sage.
JANMASHTAMI: Lord Krishna's birthday.

JAPA: Repetition of Lord's Name.
JATA: Matted hair.
JIVANMUKTA: One who is liberated in this life.
JIVANMUKTI: Liberation in this life.
JNANA: Knowledge; wisdom.
JNANADEVA: Name of a Maharashtra saint.
JNANAMUDRA: Symbol of wisdom shown in hands.
JNANINS: The wise.

K

KABIR: Name of a saint.
KAILASA: Mount Kailasa.
KAIVALYA: Emancipation; state of absolute independence.
KALI YUGA: Age of Kali—the dark evil present age.
KALPAS: Medicines intended for longevity and health.
KALYANA: Auspicious.
KAMA: Lust; desire.
KAMALASANA: Lotus pose.
KAMANDALU: A vessel carried by Hindu monks for keeping water.
KAPILA MUNI: Founder of Sankhya system of philosophy.
KARANA: Causal.
KARMA: Action.
KARTAVYA: Duty.
KARUNA: Compassion.
KARYA: Effect.
KASHAYA: Hidden desires.
KASHMIR: Name of a state in India.
KASHTHA MAUNA: Observing silence in which thoughts are not communicated to others even in writing or by signs.
KATHA: Name of an Upanishad.
KAUPIN: Loincloth.
KAUSTUBHA: Name of a gem worn by Lord Vishnu on His breast.
KAVYAS: Poems.
KAYAKALPA: Medical treatment for increasing longevity.
KEVALA: Alone.
KEVALA ASTI: Pure existence alone.
KEVALOHAM: "I am Absolute."
KHADDAR; KHADI: Hand-woven cloth.
KHECHARI MUDRA: A kind of Hatha-Yogic practice.

KIRTAN: Singing devotional songs.
KLESA: Affliction.
KORAN: Holy scripture of the Muslims.
KOSA: A sheath enclosing the Soul.
KRISHNA: Incarnation of Lord Vishnu; teacher of the Gita.
KRITA-KRITYA: One who has done everything; a liberated sage.
KRIYA: A type of exercise in Hatha Yoga.
KRODHA: Anger.
KSHAMA: Forgiveness.
KSHETRA: Place where food is distributed to Sannyasins.
KSHIPTA: Wandering state of mind.
KULA KUNDALINI: The primordial cosmic energy located in the individual.
KUMBHAKA: Retention of breath.
KUMBHAKARNA: Brother of the demon king Ravana —he used to sleep for six months.
KUNDA: A kind of jasmine flower.
KUTASTHA: Immutable; Brhaman.

L

LAGHU SIDDHANTA KAUMUDI: A Sanskrit grammar text.
LAKSHANA: Definition.
LAKSHMANA: Brother of Lord Rama.
LAKSHYA: Goal; target; point of concentration.
LANKA: Ceylon.
LAYA: Merging; dissolution.
LILA: Play; sport.
LOKASANGRAHA: Solidarity of the world.

M

MADHAI: Name of a saint.
MADHURA: Sweet.
MADHYAMA: Middle.
MAHABHARATA: A Hindu epic.
MAHARSHI: Great sage.
MAHATMA: Great soul.
MAHAVAKYAS: Great sentences of the Upanishads.
MAITRI: Friendship.
MAKARA KUNDALA: Earring of Lord Vishnu.

MALA: Impurities like lust, greed, anger, etc.
MAMATA: Mineness; attachment.
MANANA: Reflection.
MANAS: Mind.
MANASIKA: Mental.
MANDUKYA: An Upanishad.
MANIKARNIKA: A Ganga-bank in Kasi.
MANIPURA: A Yogic centre situated in the region of the navel.
MANMANAH: With mind fixed on Me (the Lord).
MANO-NASA: Destruction of mind.
MANORAJYA: Building castles in the air.
MANSOOR: Name of a Sufi sage.
MANTRA: Sacred syllable or word, or set of words through the repetition and reflection of which one attains perfection.
MANU: A divine sage regarded as the father of the human race.
MATPARAH: Devoted to Me (the Lord).
MATRAS: Units; syllables.
MATSARYA: Jealousy.
MATSYASANA: The fish-pose of Hatha Yoga.
MATSYENDRANATH: Name of a Yogi.
MAUNA: Vow of silence.
MAYA: The illusive power of Brahman.
MITAHARA: Moderate diet.
MITHYA: False.
MOHA: Infatuation.
MOKSHA: Liberation.
MRIDANGA: A kind of drum.
MRIDU: Soft.
MUDHA: Dull and forgetful state of mind.
MUDITA: Cheerfulness.
MUDRA: Certain class of Hatha Yogic exercises.
MUKTA: Liberated.
MUKTI: Liberation.
MULA-AJNANA: Primal ignorance which contains all potentialities.
MULA BANDHA: A Hatha Yogic exercise.
MULADHARA: Yogic centre situated in the base of the spine.
MUMUKSHUTVA: Aspiration for God-realisation.
MUNI: Saint.

MURTI: Image or picture.
MURTI-UPASANA: Worship of image.
MUSSOORIE: A hill-station in India.

N

NADA: Mystic sound.
NADI: Nerve; psychic current.
NADI-SUDDHI: Purification of the nerves.
NAKULA: A Pandava—younger brother of Arjuna.
NAMA-RUPA: Name and form.
NAMO: Salutation.
NANAK: Name of a saint whose last successor founded Sikhism.
NARAYANAYA: To Lord Narayana.
NASIKAGRA: The tip of the nose.
NAULI: A Hatha Yogic exercise.
NAVAVIDHA: Nine types.
NETI NETI: Not this, not this.
NIDIDHYASANA: Profound and deep meditation.
NIDRA: Sleep.
NIRAKARA: Formless.
NIRBIJA: Seedless.
NIRDVANDVA: Beyond the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain.
NIRGUNA: Without attributes.
NIRGUNO-GUNI: Brahman who possesses transcendental qualities.
NIRODHA: Restraint.
NIRUDDHA: Controlled.
NIRVANA: Liberation; final emancipation.
NIRVICHARA SAMADHI: Superconscious state where there is no mind or Triputi.
NIRVISHAYA: Without object.
NIRVIKALPA-SAMADHI: Superconscious state where there is no mind or Triputi.
NISHTHA: Steadfastness.
NISSANKALPA: Free from thoughts and imaginations.
NITYA: Eternal.
NIVRITTI MARGA: The path of renunciation.
NIYAMA: The second step in Raja Yoga; observance.

O

OJAS: Spiritual energy.
OM (KARA): The sacred syllable symbolising Brahman.
OOTY: A hill-station in India.

P

PADAM ANAMAYA: Painless seat of Brahman.
PADA SEVANA: Service of the feet of the Lord.
PADMA: Lotus.
PADMASANA: Lotus pose.
PALI: A language in which sacred books of Buddhism are found.
PANCHADASI: A book of Vedanta philosophy written by Swami Vidyaranya.
PANCHADHARANA: Five kinds of concentration of the five elements.
PANDITS: Men of wisdom.
PARA-BRAHMAN: Absolute.
PARA: Supreme.
PARAM DHAMA: Supreme abode.
PARAMAHAMSA: The highest class of Sannyasins.
PARAMPARA: Succession.
PARAVAK: Transcendental sound; a mystic sound.
PARIPURNA: Full; perfect.
PARVATI: Lord Siva's Consort.
PASCHIMOTTANASANA: A Hatha Yogic pose.
PASYANTI: The subtle state of sound.
PATANJALI: The author of Yoga-Sutras.
PATIVRATA: A chaste woman devoted to her husband.
PAV: Quarter.
PINGALA: A psychic nerve-current which terminates in the right nostril; it is heating in its effect (Solar nerve).
PITAMBARA: Yellow cloth.
PRAHLADA: Name of a demon devotee of Lord Hari.
PRAJNA: Intellect; Consciousness.
PRAJNANA: Consciousness.
PRAKASA: Light; luminosity; brightness.
PRAKRITI: Nature.
PRANA: Vital energy; life-breath.
PRANAVA: The sacred syllable Om.

PRANAYAMA: Practice of breath-control.
PRAPTI-PRAPYAM: The experience that "I have obtained everything."
PRARABDHA: The portion of Karma (action) that determines one's present life.
PRASADA: Cheerfulness; tranquillity.
PRASNA: An Upanishad.
PRATISHTHA: Reputation.
PRATIPAKSHA: Opposite.
PRATYAK: Inner.
PRATYAHARA: Abstraction; fifth step in Raja Yoga.
PRAVAHA: Continuity.
PRAVRITTI: Extrovert life.
PRAYAGA: A place of pilgrimage in India.
PREMA: Divine Love.
PRERAKA: Prompter; inspirer.
PRITHIVI: Earth.
PUJA: Worship; adoration.
PURAKA: Inhalation.
PURANA: Sacred works dealing with the doctrines of creation, etc.
PURUSHA: The Supreme Being.
PURUSHARTHA: Human effort.

R

RADHA: The name of a devotee who had transcendental love for Lord Krishna.
RAGA: Attachment.
RAGA; RAGINI: A musical mode.
RAJA: King.
RAJA YOGA: A system of Yoga generally taken to be the one propounded by Patanjali Maharshi, i.e., Ashtanga Yoga.
RAJA YOGI: One who practises Raja Yoga.
RAJAS: One of the three qualities of Prakriti which generates passion and restlessness.
RAJASUYA YAJNA: A sacrifice performed by a monarch as a mark of his subduing all other kings.
RAJESVARI: God in the aspect of Mother of Universe.
RAMA (CHANDRA): Lord Rama; incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
RAMATIRTHA: A saint.
RAMAYANA: A holy narrative of Lord Rama.

RASASVADA: Tasting the bliss of lower Samadhi.
RASAYANAS: A class of people who try to make the body strong and healthy by taking special medicines.
RATNAKAR: Sage Valmiki in his early life as a dacoit.
RECHAKA: Exhalation of breath.
RIDDHIS: Nine varieties of extraordinary exaltation.
RIK: Rig-Veda (one of the four Vedas).
RISHI: Sage.
RISHIKESH: A sacred place in the Himalayas.
RUDRA: Lord Siva.
RUDRAKSHA: A kind of berries, seeds of which are worn by religious sects as rosary.

S

SANANDA: With bliss (a kind of Samadhi).
SABIJA: With seed; a Samadhi wherein the seed of Karmas (actions) is not destroyed.
SADACHARA: Right conduct.
SADASIVA: The presiding Deity of the thousand petalled-lotus in the crown of the head.
SADHAKA: (Spiritual) aspirant.
SADHANA: Spiritual practice.
SADHU: Pious man; Sannyasin.
SAGUNA: With attributes.
SAHAJA: Natural.
SAHASA: Tenacity; application.
SAHASRARA: A Yogic centre called thousand petalled-lotus in the crown of the head.
SAHADEVA: A Pandava—brother of Arjuna.
SAKARA: With form.
SAKSHATKARA: Direct realisation.
SAKSHI: Seer; witnessing principle.
SAKTI: Power; Divine energy.
SALABHASANA: A Hatha Yogic exercise.
SALIGRAMA: A shell used for meditating upon Lord Vishnu.
SAMA: Serenity; control of mind.
SAMA GANA: Hymns of the Sama Veda.
SAMADHI: The state of superconsciousness.
SAMATA: Balanced state of mind.
SAMPAT: Wealth; virtues.
SAMPRADAYA: Cult.

SAMPRAJNATA: Lower Samadhi with the triad of meditator, meditation and the meditated.
SAMSARA: The process of worldly life.
SAMSAYA: Doubt.
SAMSKARA: Impression.
SAMYAMA: Concentration, meditation and Samadhi practised at one and the same time.
SAMYAVASTHA: State of equilibrium.
SANCHARA: Movement.
SANCHITA: Accumulated action due to previous births.
SANDHI: Junction.
SANDHYA: Dusk.
SANKALPA: Thought; imagination.
SANKARACHARYA: The well-known teacher of Vedanta philosophy.
SANKHA NADA: Sound produced by conch.
SANKIRTAN: Singing of divine songs.
SANNYASINS: Those who have embraced the life of complete renunciation.
SANTA: Peaceful.
SANTI: Peace.
SANTOSHA: Contentment.
SARASVATI: Goddess of speech.
SARIRA: Body.
SARVA: All.
SARVA-VIT: Knower of all; a liberated sage.
SARVANGASANA: A Hatha Yogic exercise.
SASTRA: Scripture.
SAT: Existence absolute.
SAT-CHIT-ANANDA: Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.
SATTVA: Purity—one of the three qualities of nature.
SATYA: Truth.
SATYA YUGA: The age of predominating in piety and righteousness.
SAUCHA: Purity.
SAVIKALPA: Lower Samadhi with the triad of meditator, meditation and meditated.
SESHADRI: Name of a sage.
SHAMS TABRIEZ: Name of a Sufi sage.
SHAT-CHAKRAS: The six mystic centres through which Kundalini passes.
SHYAMA: Lord Krishna.

SIDDHANTA: Established tenet of doctrine.
SIDDHASANA: A pose for meditation.
SIDDHI: Psychic power.
SIRSHASANA: Topsy-turvy pose of Hatha Yoga.
SITA: The devoted wife of Lord Rama.
SITALI: A breathing exercise with cooling effect.
SIVA: Lord Siva—bestower of auspiciousness on His devotees.
SIVARATRI: A Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Siva.
SKANDHA: Chapter.
SLOKA: Verse.
SOHAM: "I am That."
SOKA: Sorrow.
SPHATIKA: Crystal.
SPHURANA: Rising (of thought).
SRAVANA: Hearing.
SRI: Auspiciousness—a name is qualified by putting "Sri" before it as a mark of courtesy and auspiciousness.
SRISHTI: Creation.
SRUTIS: Upanishads; revelations; Vedas.
STABDHA: Stupefied state of mind.
STHITA: Established.
STHULA: Gross.
STOTRA: Hymn.
STYANA: Sloth; idleness; indisposition of the mind to work.
SUDDHA: Pure.
SUFI: A Mohammedan sect.
SUKA DEVA: Name of a sage.
SUKHA: Bliss.
SUKSHMA: Subtle.
SUSHUMNA: The Yogic nerve through which Kundalini passes.
SUTRA: Aphorism.
SUTRATMA: Cosmic mind; the immanent Deity of the totality of the subtle bodies.
SVARUPA: Essence; the essential nature of Brahman.
SVABHAVA: One's own nature due to impressions of the past actions.
SVADHISHTHANA: The second of the six Chakras according to Hatha Yoga.
SVADHYAYA: Study of scriptures.
SVAJATIYA: The idea of one's own essential nature.

SVAPNA: Dream.
SVASTIKA: A Hatha Yogic pose for meditation.
SVAYAMJYOTIS: Self-light; Atman.
SVETASVATARA: An Upanishad.

T

TADAKARA; TADRUPA: Identification.
TAILADHARAVAT: Like continuous flow of oil.
TAMAS; TAMO-GUNA: One of the three qualities of nature which generates inertia, laziness, dullness and infatuation.
TANDRI: Drowsiness; half sleep state.
TANMATRA: Rudimentary elements.
TANMAYA (TA): State of absorption.
TANTRIKA: Belonging to Tantra which is a path of Sadhana laying great stress upon repetition of Mantra and other esoteric meditations.
TANUMANASI: Thread-like state of mind.
TAPANIYA: Name of an Upanishad.
TAPAS: Austerity.
TAPASCHARYA: Practice of austerity.
TARKA-SANGRAHA: A book of logic.
TARKIKA: Logician.
TAT TVAM ASI: "Thou art That"—a great sentence.
TADBODHA: Knowledge of the nature of Brahman.
TATTVA: Essence; principle.
TEJAS: Spiritual aura.
TEJOMAYA: Full of light; resplendent.
TEVARAM: Songs of the South Indian mystics.
TILAKA: A mark on the forehead.
TIRASKARA: Disrespect; insult.
TITIKSHA: Endurance; bearing with equanimity heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.
TITTIBHA: A bird.
TIVRA: Intense; keen; sharp.
TUSHNIM: Neutral state of mind, which is an obstacle in meditation.
TRATAKA: Steady gazing.
TRIKUTI: The space between the two eyebrows.
TRIPHALA: An Ayurvedic medicine.
TRIPTI: Satisfaction.

TRIPURA SAMHARA: Destruction of demons Tripuras by Lord Siva.
TRIPUTI: The triad—seer, sight and seen.
TRISHNA: Thirsting for objects; craving after sense-objects.
TRIVENI: The place where the three holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati meet.
TUKARAM: A saint.
TULASI: Holy Basil plant.
TULASIDAS: The saint author of the Hindi Ramayana (Ramcharitmanas).
TURIYA: Superconscious state.
TUSHTI: Contentment.
TYAGA: Renunciation (of egoism, desires and the world).

U

UDDALAKA: A great Rishi (sage) of yore.
UDDHAVA: A friend and great devotee of Lord Krishna.
UDDIYANA-BANDHA: A Hatha Yogic exercise.
UMA: Lord Siva's Consort.
UPADESA: Instruction.
UPADHI: Limiting adjunct.
UPANISHAD: Revelation; text dealing with Ultimate Truth and Its Realisation.
UPARATI: Satiety in the enjoyment of sense-objects.
UPASANA VAKYA: A sentence for meditation.
UPASYA: Object of devout meditation.
UPEKSHA: Indifference.
USHA-PANA: Drinking water in the morning as soon as one gets up after cleaning the teeth. This is Hatha Yogic treatment for constipation.
UTSAHA: Enthusiasm.
UTTARAKASI: A place in the Himalayas.

V

VAIKHARI: Articulate form of sound.
VAIKUNTHA: The abode of Lord Vishnu.
VAIRAGYA: Dispassion.
VAJRA: Thunderbolt.
VAJRASANA: A Hatha Yogic pose.
VAK: Speech.

VAK-INDRIYA: The organ of speech.
VAKYA: Sentence.
VALLABHA: The Lord; Master.
VALMIKI: The holy sage and author of the Sanskrit Ramayana.
VANDANA: Adoration; worship.
VARADANDA: The staff of blessings.
VASANAS: Subtle desires.
VASTU: Reality.
VAYU: Wind.
VEDANTA: The school of Hindu thoughts (based primarily on the Upanishads).
VEDANTINS: Those who follow the path of Vedanta.
VEDAS: The highest authority among the Aryans of India.
VICHARA-SAGARA: Book treating with Vedanta philosophy.
VICHARA: Enquiry into the nature of Brahman.
VIGHNA: Obstacle.
VIJATIYA: Relating to not-Self; thoughts of worldly objects.
VIKARA: Passionate excitement.
VIKSHEPA: The tossing of mind.
VIKSHIPTA: Scattered; gathering mind.
VIMARSA: Dissatisfaction; displeasure.
VINA: A musical instrument.
VIPARITA: Contrary.
VIRASANA: A Hatha Yogic pose.
VIRAT: Macrocosm; Lord in His form as the manifested universe.
VIRYA: Seminal energy.
VISHAYAS: Sense-objects.
VISHNU: Lord Vishnu—the preserver and sustainer.
VISRANTI: Resting.
VISUDDHA: Pure.
VISVARUPA: Cosmic form.
VIVARTA: Illusory appearance; apparent change.
VIVEKA: Discrimination.
VIVEKACHUDAMANI: A Vedantic book.
VRITTI: Thought-wave; mental modification.
VRITTINIRODHA: Control of thought-waves.
VYAVAHARA: (Worldly) activity.

Y

YAJNAVALKYA: A great sage of yore.
YAJUS: Yajur-Veda.
YAMA: First step in Raja Yoga; non-violence, truthfulness, etc.
YATI: An ascetic or a Sannyasi or a monk.
YOGA: Union; union with the Supreme Being—any course that makes for such union.
YOGA BHRASHTA: One who has fallen from the high state of Yoga in his previous birth.
YOGARUDHA: One who is established in Yoga.
YOGAVASISHTHA: A monumental work on Vedanta.
YOGI: One who practises Yoga.
YOGINDRA: Lord of Yogis.
YONI MUDRA: A Hatha Yogic exercise.
YUDHISHTHIRA: The eldest of the Pandavas—Arjuna's brother.

Z

ZEND AVESTA: The holy scripture of the Persians.

About This Book:

"Concentration and Meditation" form the inner core of the practice of Yoga. It is the key to the door of Inner Illumination and constitutes the central pivot round which all Sadhana in the spiritual field revolves. Dharana and Dhyana are the Yoga proper, leading to the consummation, Samadhi and Sakshatkara or Realisation.

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